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THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND PRACTICE OF HANNAH
MORE, (1745 - 1833); A STUDY IN EVANGELICAL
EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
acceptance, a thesis entitled The Educational Ideas
and Practice of Hannah More, (1745 - 1833); A Study
in Evangelical Education submitted by Peter J.
Miller in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study are to examine the several educational activities of Hannah More in the political, social, economic and religious context of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century England, and to attempt an assessment of the significance of these activities for her own time and for posterity.

Chapter II contains an account of those aspects of Georgian and Regency England that are particularly relevant for an understanding of Miss More's opinions and work. It examines the predominant spirit of the age, the major political and social viewpoints and their reflection in the kinds of education provided for the various orders of society. Considerable attention is paid to the Evangelical revival within the Church of England, perhaps the most significant development of the late eighteenth century as far as Hannah More was concerned.

Hannah More's involvement in her world is discussed in Chapter III. The first half of her life, in which her literary interests predominated, is considered as a preparation for the many 'useful' works in which she engaged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her social, political and religious viewpoints are examined and her 'useful' works discussed in the light of these views. She appears both as a product of the age in which she lived and, at the same time, one of its most influential critics.

In Chapter IV, Miss More's work among the poor of her locality is dealt with. To achieve her object of Christianising and humanising the poor of the district, she established schools and friendly societies,

gave away much money and even more advice, and, using a variety of methods, attempted to re-vitalize the Church in the area.

These activities aroused considerable opposition, culminating in the Blagdon Controversy, which developed into a national issue lasting from 1800 to 1803. The events leading up to the Controversy, the issues which underlay it and the course of events are examined in Chapter V.

In Chapter VI, Miss More's tracts for the middle and lower classes are discussed. Several of the tracts are dealt with in some detail in order to illustrate the political, social, economic and religious ideas which Miss More preached so forcefully to the people of England.

The didactic and educational works of Miss More are considered in Chapter VII. Miss More's books all contained two distinct aspects. On the one hand, she was concerned to point out to the upper orders their many shortcomings. Her works are thus full of criticisms of the social and religious mores of 'polite society,' and particularly of the contemporary methods of educating young ladies. On the other hand, she made many educational recommendations designed to remedy the weaknesses of the contemporary system. The nature and validity of the criticisms are discussed and an analysis of her recommendations made. In her educational ideas, Miss More is shown to have been influenced, not only by her militant Evangelicalism, but by other streams of eighteenth century thought.

Chapter VIII briefly assesses the significance of Miss More's educational activities. The issues her work raised and the many opinions held about them are discussed. Miss More is shown to have anticipated in her writings much that was to become part of the 'Victorian frame of

mind.' She emerges from the study as a woman of considerable independence of mind and impossible to categorise. Although many of her ideas and much of her work are typical of the Evangelical educator, it is apparent that to treat her merely as an Evangelical is to fail to do her or her work justice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The main purposes of this study are to explicate the educational ideas of Hannah More, examine her work in education within the context of the life of England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and attempt an assessment of the significance of her ideas and work for her own time and for posterity.

Few people today have ever heard of Hannah More, and most of those who 'know the name' vaguely associate her with Sunday Schools, tracts for the poor and a series of unreadable books. No complete edition of her works has been published for over a hundred years, and those copies of her books that have survived are rarely, if ever, read. It is significant that the writer discovered on a library shelf an 1803 edition of her works with many of the pages still uncut. Miss More has suffered perhaps the greatest indignity that posterity has to offer, neglect.

However, students of eighteenth and nineteenth century English education can ill afford to ignore her life and work. Few people have lived through more profound and far-reaching social, economic, political and religious changes. Her reactions to these changes were typical of many of the upper and middle orders of society, and in her correspondence and writings one is able to catch a glimpse of what many of these ranks felt about the political, social, religious and educational issues of this great watershed of English life.

The late eighteenth century experienced a new and intense interest

in education,¹ which manifested itself in a variety of educational experiments and innovations. Examples of these are to be found in the work of Mrs. Trimmer, the experiments of the Edgeworths, the schemes of Owen, and the 'inventions' of Bell and Lancaster. By far the most important innovation in education during this period was the Sunday school movement. It was on this base of popular education that the nineteenth century was so laboriously to build the superstructure of the English educational system. Miss More's position in this movement was an important one, and her Mendip Operation,² in many ways, unique. At the same time, her work among the poor may be considered representative of many of the efforts of the upper orders to help and improve the poor. In this respect, her schools are in the long tradition of the eighteenth century charity school movement.

If, in her work among the poor, Miss More was typical of the eighteenth century Christian philanthropist, in her efforts to reform the upper orders of English society, she was an important figure in the Evangelical party within the Church of England, headed by Wilberforce and dedicated to reforming society in its own image of Christian piety and puritanism. Miss More's importance as a figure helping to produce and record the changes in morality and religion which mark off Regency from Victorian England makes her didactic writings and educational works particularly worthy of study.

¹Infra., Chapter II, pp. 23-24.

²Infra., Chapter IV.

Her criticisms of contemporary female education were penetrating and throw considerable light on that often neglected area of eighteenth century educational history. Her recommendations in the field of women's education are noteworthy in that they represented a combination of Evangelicalism, which in many ways anticipated the Victorian 'frame of mind,' and eighteenth century Enlightenment thought.

Finally, in the support for and antagonism to the writings and work of Hannah More, one can distinguish most, if not all, of the contemporary attitudes to religion and education.

There are innumerable contemporary sources containing information about Miss More's educational activities. She lived in an age of diaries, journals and voluminous correspondence, and there are references to her, her books and her work in almost every published collection of personal papers of the period.

The writings of Miss More that bear directly or indirectly on education are several. Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society,³ published in 1788, and An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,⁴ published in 1790, were her most popular didactic books, although they are concerned only indirectly with education. More important for the purposes of this study are her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education,⁵ 1799, Hints towards

³Hannah More, Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society, Works, Vol. III. D. Graisberry, London, 1803.

⁴Hannah More, An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, Ibid.

⁵Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, Ibid., Vol. IV.

Forming the Character of a Young Princess,⁶ 1803, and Coelebs in Search of a Wife,⁷ 1809. Her Cheap Repository Tracts,⁸ consisting of short stories and ballads, are important sources of her view of the role of the lower orders in society and the ideas she attempted to convey to them.

The Mendip Annals, The Journal of Martha More,⁹ edited by William Roberts and not published until 1859, is a first-hand account of the operation of Miss More's schools in the Mendip villages. It is not only an indispensable source of information but a fascinating social document.

William Roberts' Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More,¹⁰ published in 1836, contains a great deal of Hannah More's personal correspondence and several extracts from her journal. It is perhaps the key document in any study of her life and work. Henry Thompson's biography of Hannah More¹¹ was published only five years after her death, and, since Thompson was personally acquainted with Miss More during the last years of her life, it contains a great deal of first-hand information about her life and opinions.

⁶Hannah More, Hints toward Forming the Character of a Young Princess, 2 Vols., T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1805.

⁷Hannah More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife, 2 Vols., T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1813.

⁸Hannah More, Tales for the Common People, Works, Vol. III, and Hannah More, Stories for Persons of the Middle Ranks, Works, Vol. II.

⁹Martha More, (ed. William Roberts), The Mendip Annals, The Journal of Martha More, James Nisbett and Co., London, 1859.

¹⁰William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836.

¹¹Henry Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838.

William Shaw's Life of Hannah More,¹² published in 1802, is worthless as a reliable source of information about the activities of Miss More, but illustrates well the intense feelings that her work aroused. Contemporary opinions about Miss More's work are also to be found in the leading periodicals of the day, in particular, Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, The Anti-Jacobin and The British Critic.

There have been several biographies of Miss More written in this century, all of them by women. Three of them, those of Jones,¹³ Hopkins,¹⁴ and Meakin,¹⁵ have been used in this study. Only Jones has shown any real concern for the educational activities of Miss More and her book has done much to rehabilitate Miss More in the eyes of the twentieth century.

To the best of the writer's knowledge, however, there has as yet been no attempt made to study in depth Miss More's educational ideas and work. It is hoped that this study will at least partially remedy this deficiency.

¹²Rev. Sir Archibald McSarcasm, (William Shaw), The Life of Hannah More, with a critical review of her writings, T. Hurst, London, 1802.

¹³M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952.

¹⁴M. A. Hopkins, Hannah More and Her Circle, Longmans Green and Co., New York, 1947.

¹⁵Annette M. B. Meakin, Hannah More, John Murray, London, 1919.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD OF HANNAH MORE

Hannah More's life, stretching from 1745 to 1833, covered one of the most complex periods of change in English history. She was born in the year that saw the final laying of the ghost of Jacobite hopes in England. She lived through the humiliation of 1783, the uncertainty and panic of the 1790s, and saw the final triumph of her country in 1815. She died less than a year after the passing of the Great Reform Bill, which epitomised many of the political and social changes that occurred during her life-time. It was in this period that England ceased to be a small, albeit influential, maritime power and became the most powerful state in the world, unchallenged in sea-power or industrial strength. Most satisfying of all to Hannah More, during the final years of her life, there had begun that wholesale transformation of the social mores of the upper orders of society which marks off Regency from Victorian England. These events and changes were much more than just a background to the life of Hannah More; they were an integral part of her day-to-day existence, and her life and opinions acquire significance and can be understood only in terms of the "teeming, clamouring, irregular, enthralling England of the eighteenth century."¹

Historians delight in bestowing epithets upon particular periods of history. The period of Hannah More's life has been well endowed with them. It has been variously called The Age of Improvement, The Age of Transition,

¹Lord David Cecil, The Stricken Deer, or The Life of Cowper, Constable and Co., London, 1947, p. 4.

The Age of Elegance, The Age of Benevolence, and even The Age of Scandal. While each of these epithets is of value in that it emphasises one aspect of the period, none of them suggest that feature of life that was common throughout the whole period and in all areas of experience. Above all, it was an age of extremes; extremes of great wealth and great poverty, of supreme benevolence and savage cruelty, of genteel elegance and gross crudity of speech and behaviour, of dry indifference and unabashed emotionalism. It is in these extremes that the real spirit of Georgian and Regency England is to be found.

There is no doubt that for the rich it was, in many respects, an age of elegance. For the very rich, it was an age of grandeur. De la Rochefoucauld, writing home in 1784, marvelled at the expensiveness of all that he had seen in England, and concluded, correctly, "The English must be richer than we are."² England was rich, and there was no lack of ostentation to prove this fact to visitors. All of them admitted to being impressed by the number and splendor of English country houses, all "set amid the common denominators of park, lawn and drive."³ Some, like Castle Howard, Petworth and Blenheim, were veritable palaces, and all were scrupulously maintained, sometimes by whole armies of servants. The Duke of Bridgewater at Ashworth, for example, employed some 500 men in his gardens and workshops.⁴

²R. Bayne-Powell, Travellers in Eighteenth Century England, J. Murray, London, 1951, pp. 137-138.

³Arthur Bryant, The Age of Elegance, Collins, London, 1950, p. 161.

⁴Ibid., p. 162.

The life of the inmates of these country houses and their town counterparts matched the elegance of their exteriors and decor.

The gentlemen hunted, raced, shot, fished, read, played at billiards, cards, écarté, looked after their estates, sat on the Bench, and joined in charades with the ladies; the latter gossiped, sketched, made scrapbooks, embroidered stools, looked at engravings, walked in their gardens and inspected the greenhouses, ...constantly dressed and redressed, and displayed their elegant accomplishments to the gentlemen.⁵

Whatever the wealthy did was accomplished with little regard for expense. Expenditures on food and drink were enormous. De la Rochefoucauld sorrowfully informed his correspondent that dinner often lasted five hours or more.⁶ Hannah More, in disgust and wonder, recorded that she attended a breakfast given by Lady Stormont in 1783, at which were laid out £150 worth of strawberries.⁷ Clothes and fashions in dress grew in costliness and even more in extravagance of taste up to the period of the French Revolution, and were a favorite subject for cartoonists and caricaturists.⁸ "For the great landlords, the London season ran away with thousands of pounds in housekeeping, stabling, entertaining and amusement."⁹ Horse-racing and gambling, two of the most popular amusements of the rich were also the most expensive and the cause of many a lost fortune. Lord

⁵Ibid., p. 163.

⁶Bayne-Powell, op. cit., p. 137.

⁷Hannah More to her sister, May 29, 1783. William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I. p. 230.

⁸A. S. Turberville, English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century, Oxford University Press, New York, 1957. pp. 94-98.

⁹G. E. Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963. p. 157.

Grosvenor, for example, in debt to the tune of £151,000, still managed to spend £7,000 a year on his stable of race-horses.¹⁰

Yet however elegant and genteel the life of the upper orders appeared, there were other equally important aspects of the lives of the wealthy and powerful, ones which they shared with the lower orders of society. Whatever elegance the lives of the rich contained was more than counterbalanced by aspects of life that were decidedly inelegant. There was an earthiness and animality about eighteenth century life that are quite inconsistent with the sobriety, good taste and good breeding suggested by the word "Georgian".

The polite, formal conversations and grandiloquent expressions of courtesy were no more typical of the age than topics of conversation and expressions which even the most broadminded of later generations would find extremely offensive.¹¹

The quiet dignified respectability that was advocated from the pulpits of innumerable 'unenthusiastic' parsons and the great deference paid to members of the other sex proceeded alongside many gross scandals and frequent lapses of morality among the "rosy, frankly-bosomed trollops and doxies of Covent Garden."¹² Beside the literary clubs of Doctor Johnson

¹⁰Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1961. pp. 18-20.

¹²Cecil, op. cit., p. 9.

and the Bas Bleu,¹³ the revival of Shakespeare and the performances of Garrick must be placed Cupid's Gardens,¹⁴ The Royal Diversion,¹⁵ bull-baiting, cock-fights, goose-riding and prize-fights.

In an age of great benevolence to the poor, there were over two hundred capital offences, and, in spite of the reluctance of juries to convict, there were many savage sentences passed with little regard for age or sex. "The barbarity of the English penal code struck many foreigners with horror. They declared it exceeded anything to be found in France, Italy, or the German states."¹⁶

Finally, no matter how exalted the station, how elegant and extravagant the life, there still remained the ever-present possibilities of disease and death. All classes of society lived much closer to death than subsequent generations; its imminence and proximity were part and parcel of everyone's day-to-day existence. Perhaps this fact explains yet another un-Georgian characteristic of the Georgian age, its great emotionalism.

¹³The Bas Bleu or Blue Stockings was the name given to a group of literary minded ladies, which was formed in the second half of the eighteenth century. It included such figures as Lady Montagu, Mrs. Siddons, Fanny Burney, Mrs. Vesey, Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft.

¹⁴Cupid's Gardens, situated on the South bank of the Thames, were the site of all kinds of amusements, many of them obscene; see Bayne-Powell, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁵The Royal Diversion was half tavern and half brothel and the subject of much notoriety in the eighteenth century. Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 167.

This emotional tensivity, which again is hardly consistent with an age that prized rationality and abhorred any show of enthusiasm, found its most frequent expression in the simple expedient of weeping. The amount of tears shed in Georgian England is astonishing, particularly when one considers its people's ability to endure great pain with stoical indifference. Hannah More, in a letter to Wilberforce, mentioned a clergyman who burst into tears (we hope with joy) when he saw a long line of ruffians waiting to get into Sunday school.¹⁷ The House of Commons was the scene of many tearful episodes and as late as 1815, Creevey could write, "There was not a dry eye in the House. ...Tierney sobbed so, he was unable to speak."¹⁸ John Wesley and particularly George Whitfield found no difficulty in reducing bands of hardened miners to tears and a state of emotional exhaustion with sermons that would send a twentieth century audience to sleep within minutes.

Yet here the resemblance between rich and poor ended. Nowhere are the great extremes of the eighteenth century more obvious than in the difference between the lives of the very rich and the very poor.

For the lower orders, life was usually 'nasty, brutish and short', and frequently full of violence. In London, it was sometimes doubtful whether King Mob or King George was in control. "No nation rioted more easily or more savagely -- from 1714 to 1830 angry mobs, burning and looting, were as prevalent as disease, and as frequent in the countryside

¹⁷Hannah More to Wilberforce, October 14, 1795, Roberts, op. cit. Vol. I. pp. 567-568 and Infra.Chapter V, p. 109.

¹⁸T. H. White, The Age of Scandal, G. P. Putnams, New York, 1950. p. 218.

as in the great towns."¹⁹ That these riots produced no revolution was due mainly to the sporadic nature of the outbreaks and the mob's complete failure to win any support from the middle orders of society.

While the poor were denied the opportunity of participating in the more genteel pleasures of the upper orders, they certainly enjoyed the more brutal amusements that were available. The whipping of half-naked women at the Bridewell, the stoning of unpopular pilloried prisoners, and public executions were both cheap and popular entertainments. Even Parson Woodforde made a point of taking in public hangings and records that he attended one at Oxford along with some six thousand other spectators.²⁰ The excitement and air of festivity that were aroused by public executions are nowhere better described than in Horace Walpole's detailed account of the execution of Lord Ferrers, which is a good deal more macabre than his celebrated Castle of Ottranto.²¹

For the very poor, housing conditions in town and country were appalling.²² Lack of sanitation, space, ventilation and heat were the common lot of all the poor. Disease and gin took a fearful toll of life. Such conditions produced the inevitable evils of drunkenness, crime and prostitution. As late as January 1816, the Anti-Jacobin reported that

¹⁹J. H. Plumb, The First Four Georges, MacMillan Co., New York, 1950. p.14.

²⁰J. Woodforde, (ed. J. Beresford), The Diary of a Country Parson, Oxford University Press, London, 1924. Vol. I. p. 148.

²¹H. Walpole, (ed. P. Toynbee), Letters of Horace Walpole, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1904. Vol. IV. pp.370-371 and 378-388.

²²Dorothy Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century, Longmans Green and Co., London, 1956. pp. 167-170, and Steven Watson, The Reign of George III, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1960. pp. 522-524.

the city swarms with prostitutes, who pick up men, in the public streets, Cheapside, for instance, in the middle of the day; while within its precincts, thieves, receivers of stolen goods, and keepers of brothels, find, if not a sure refuge, a ready protection.²³

Of course, it would be absurd to suggest that there were not many families who lived sober, hardworking and God-fearing lives. Most, if not all, of the middle class Dissenters were not wildly extravagant, did not lead lives of genteel elegance, and certainly could not be described as brutal or depraved. The sober and, in some ways, puritanical views of Doctor Johnson were typical of a large segment of the population, for there were always plenty of the 'serious-minded' in all ranks of society.

For these 'serious-minded', and particularly for the Evangelicals, it was a society, the whole ethos of which was in dire need of reformation. The extravagance, immorality, and lack of vital religion which characterised the lives of so many of the upper orders of society were disastrous. Not only were they symptoms of corruption in their own elevated ranks, but their presence among the upper orders made it impossible for this elevated rank to set a proper example to its subordinates. The brutality, immorality, violence, crime and irreligion, which were all too obvious among the lower orders, could never be replaced with sound principles of sobriety, hard work and respect for rank and for God unless the profligacy of the upper orders was eradicated.

Perhaps the most dramatic and surprising change that occurred during Hannah More's lifetime was in the spirit of the age. By the time she died, a new world was coming into being, a world in which recollections

²³Brown, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

of Georgian and Regency England were not fit for polite conversation.

A classic illustration is furnished by Walter Scott's story of his grandmother who, towards the end of her life, found herself blushing as she read in private a novel of Aphra Behn that she could remember having read aloud in mixed company when she was a girl.²⁴

It is important to remember, however, that Hannah More lived most of her life in an age, the predominant spirit of which she found it impossible to approve.

If Hannah More wished to see a reformation of the religious and moral ethos of society, she was, in common with most Englishmen of her age, equally concerned to preserve what was for them a 'providential' society. Even a cursory glance at the political, economic and social developments in England during Hannah More's lifetime reveals an ambivalence that characterised most Englishmen's attitude to change. On the one hand, it is true that, increasingly after 1760, Englishmen were more and more convinced of the beneficial results which accrued from improved methods of agricultural and industrial production and from increased trade in widened markets. The latter inevitably led to an aggressive foreign policy towards actual and potential competitors. This conviction, inherent in many of the pamphlets of the first half of the century,²⁵ came to full flower in the

²⁴Ibid., p. 41.

²⁵Daniel Defoe, for example, wrote in 1728,

Upon the whole, to sum it up in a few words, Trade is the wealth of the world. Trade makes the difference as to Rich and Poor, between one nation and another; Trade nourishes Industry, Industry begets Trade; Trade dispenses the natural wealth of the world, and Trade raises new Species of wealth, which Nature knew nothing of; Trade has two daughters, whose fruitful Progeny in Arts may be said to employ Mankind, namely

MANUFACTURE

and

NAVIGATION.

Cited in J. H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century, Penguin Books, London, 1959, p. 21.

writings of Adam Smith and is the cornerstone of the Victorian ideal of progress. On the other hand, in the period up to 1830, this ideal of material progress through increased production and trade was not to find a complementary expression in a generally felt desire for political and social change. Change was good only if it did not threaten the social and political organisation given by Divine Providence to a chosen people. All the political and social developments that took place during Hannah More's lifetime, the American and French Revolutions, the growth of political radicalism, and even the movements for popular education, occurred within the framework of this widely accepted and extremely conservative conception of a 'providential' society.

In politics, such a belief led to the conviction that the English constitution was the most perfect yet devised by man or evolved in nature. Any tampering with or threat to this constitution was regarded with great suspicion. The political status quo, concentrating all political power in the hands of those who had the best interests of the country at heart, the landed classes and the great merchants, must be preserved in its essentials.

In the same way, the social structure, with its principles of rank and subordination, was thought to be the best possible arrangement. Any attempt to alter it was considered not only foolhardy, but sacrilegious. While English society may have been fluid and mobile compared with European countries, by today's standards it was extremely rigid. "It had its ranks and orders and its necessary degrees of subordination and authority. They were rarely called into question."²⁶

²⁶Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement, Longmans, London, 1959. .p. 9.

The reasons why such beliefs remained so widespread and found so much support are not hard to discover. Apart from the innate conservatism of man in any age, the lower orders were rarely, if ever, interested in movements which sought to alter the existing state of affairs. Indeed, the maintenance of the principles of rank and subordination was as important to them as it was to the rich and powerful. Rank not only implied privileges but responsibilities. As G. M. Trevelyan points out,

The political spirit of the eighteenth century was based not on equality but on the harmony of classes. It was far removed alike from the rebellious Radicalism and the reactionary Toryism which... sprang up from the combined effects of the industrial and French Revolutions. Chatham's 'loyal Britons' had not yet become Burke's 'swinish multitude'. Poor and rich together took a patriotic pride in our 'free constitution', which they continually contrasted with the slavery of continental countries.²⁷

More important, most of the economically and all of the politically powerful found the status quo very much to their advantage. The landed interest, the great merchants, and the "thousand and one little oligarchies which stretched like a fine network across the length and breadth of the land"²⁸ were all well satisfied with the world as they found it. Although their interests might occasionally conflict with one another,²⁹ there was never any widespread suggestion that these differences should be resolved by any change in the political or social structure.

Behind these powerful interest groups was firmly ranged that traditionally conservative institution, the Church. Not only was the Church subject to increasing government influence throughout the eighteenth

²⁷G. M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century and After (1782 - 1919), Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1956. p. 19.

²⁸Plumb, The First Four Georges, p. 27.

²⁹The London mercantile interest, for example, stood to gain a great deal from an aggressive foreign policy which would secure it new markets. The landed classes, on the other hand, tended to be anti-war, since upon them fell the burden of the land tax, which invariably increased in time of war.

century,³⁰ but, as the century wore on, "the clergy and responsible laity were fully attuned to one another"³¹ and eventually "became fused into a single type."³² At the end of the century, as a bulwark of conservatism combatting the pernicious radicalism of reformers and revolutionaries, the Church performed nobly, and not at all unwillingly.

There were, too, any amount of theories put forward throughout the eighteenth century to rationalise the existing political and social structure. Whether these philosophical justifications proceeded from the rational commonsense of John Locke, the blind reverence for the past of Edmund Burke, or the theological premises of Soame Jenyns,³³ they could all be used as arguments for preserving things as they were.

Looked at from one perspective, the whole educational system of the upper orders was yet another bulwark of conservatism. They "governed the country and led society not only because of their wealth and political power, but also because they formed an elite, educated and trained from childhood to fulfill their role in society."³⁴ Education for the upper orders was little more than an extended initiation ceremony into a very exclusive club.

³⁰N. Sykes, Church and State in Eighteenth Century England, Archon Books, Hamden, Conn., 1962. pp. 41-91.

³¹G. F. A. Best, Temporal Pillars, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1964. p. 73.

³²Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 24.

³³Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, Chatto and Windsor, London, 1940. pp. 46 ff.

³⁴Mingay, op. cit., p. 131.

The principal institutions of formal education for the rich were the grammar and public schools, which, bound by their foundation statutes, provided a purely classical education. Latin 'declamations' and reading and writing Latin and Greek verse were the main academic occupations of the students.³⁵ Life for the inmates of these schools was anything but genteel. Severe corporal punishment and frequent and open insubordination of the students were commonplace occurrences. "The Riot Act was read at Westminster in 1770; and the same school 'rebelled' in 1774, 1793, and 1818. Similar disorders took place at Harrow in 1771 and 1818, and at Rugby in 1797 and 1822."³⁶

There were many denunciations of the grammar and public schools and many of the more wealthy took to employing private tutors who taught the student at home and accompanied him on the 'continental tour'. Those boys who succeeded in surviving the ordeal of a public or grammar school education, however, may well have derived some advantage over the more sheltered elements of English upper order youth who were educated at home. Halévy points out that the "confidence and conceit" of the public school boy at university was in marked contrast to the "timidity and awkwardness" of the young man educated at home.³⁷

Academic education was a secondary concern for most of the rich and powerful. "They were not educating their sons for commerce; they were

³⁵A. S. Turberville, Johnson's England, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1952, Vol. II. pp. 216-221, and Mingay, op. cit., pp. 132-133.

³⁶J. W. Adamson, A Short History of Education, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1919. p. 220.

³⁷Elie Halévy, History of the English People, Vol I, England in 1815, Barnes and Noble Inc., New York, 1961. pp. 536-537.

indifferent to science. What they valued in the great public schools of the country was their aristocratic and manly system of education."³⁸ The most important benefits to be derived from education were not ones which could be gained from any kind of academic training. For example, 'bottom', that indefinable quality which enabled its possessor to withstand pain with little or no emotion, to perform all kinds of dangerous feats and to risk a fortune on the toss of a coin without blinking an eye, was much more highly prized than intellectual attainments.³⁹ Flogging was considered beneficial for the strengthening of character,⁴⁰ while riding straight to hounds and other dangerous sports developed courage and manliness. This lack of emphasis on academic study was so marked a feature of English education that Jefferson warned his friends not to send their sons to England to be educated. "If he goes to England, he learns drinking, horse-racing and boxing. These are the peculiarities of English education."⁴¹

When, eventually, the young man made his way to the university, the outlook on life that he took with him and bred there was not one which would lead him to consider critically the foundations of the world that

³⁸Ibid., p. 535.

³⁹White, op. cit., pp. 80-95, and Bryant, op. cit., pp. 264-266.

⁴⁰See, for example, Doctor Johnson's defence of corporal punishment. James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson, Modern Library Series, Random House, New York, 1952. p. 196.

⁴¹Thomas Jefferson to J. Bannister, October 15, 1795, E. W. Knight and C. L. Hall, Readings in American Educational History, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., New York, 1951. p. 91.

was so good to him. Oxford and Cambridge remained the preserves of the Church of England and theology was still considered the chief of studies.⁴² In spite of the increasing numbers of poorer boys who made their way to the two universities,⁴³ the vast majority of students and lecturers came from the aristocracy, the landed gentry and the rich merchants. Although the self-perpetuating governing bodies of Oxford and Cambridge might demonstrate their independence from the central government by verbal attacks on it in sermons, speeches and pamphlets, the principles upon which the whole political and social structure was founded were never called into question.

Thus, from early childhood, the son of a member of the upper orders was indoctrinated with the idea that he was, completely and irrevocably, a member of the chosen few who were to lead and govern, clearly distinct from those lower orders whose existence, while a cause for compassion and benevolence, proceeded in a different world to his own.

What education there was for girls in the eighteenth century was mainly directed to making them more attractive to men. This is hardly surprising when one remembers that marriage was the only respectable 'career' open to women of fortune. In the eighteenth century, marriage was 'big business', and many a landowner in straightened circumstances was able to repair his fortunes by permitting some wealthy merchant, financier or professional man with social aspirations to marry into the family. It was

⁴²Turberville, Johnson's England, Vol. II, pp. 226-240. and S. J. Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, London, 1957. pp 133-137.

⁴³N. Hans, New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, London, 1957. pp. 43-44.

important that girls be prepared for the kind of life it was hoped they would eventually lead. Ambitious middle class families were only too willing to spend money on a 'correct' education for their daughters who might well prove to be their entrée into polite society. Whether they were educated in the home or at one of the many private academies for young ladies, the content of their education was the same. A passing acquaintance with Italian and French, painting, embroidery, singing and dancing were considered ample endowments for a lady of rank.⁴⁴ While there were always a considerable number of highly intelligent and cultured ladies in polite society, who considered it their function to patronise art, organise literary clubs and occasionally even to write memoirs and letters for publication,⁴⁵ they are notable mainly because they stood out so markedly from the vast majority of their peers.

The forces of conservatism were thus extremely powerful and are visible in the opposition to any movement which had serious political or social repercussions. It is significant, for example, that the 'economical reformers' of the last quarter of the century justified their demands by insisting that the constitution be brought back to the balance it possessed in 1760 before the insidious increase of the power and influence of the throne had begun to take place. The strength of the forces of the status quo is nowhere more obvious than in the reaction in England to the French Revolution. Continental despotism and popery may well have been considerable evils, but they were infinitely preferable to revolution, anarchy and

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 197-208.

⁴⁵Mingay, op. cit., pp. 141-142.

atheism. It was not until the issues of 'Cash, Corn, and Catholics' came to the fore after 1815 that the forces of political and social change began to appear as powerful as those of the established order.⁴⁶

In their attitude to the education of the lower orders, the forces of conservatism found themselves in a dilemma. On the one hand, it was generally recognised that a solution to the problem of pauperism and the inculcation in the poor of habits of sobriety, loyalty, hard work and respect for rank and for God could only be achieved by education. But if education was to be provided for the poor, how much was necessary and what was to be its character? Was there not a real danger that the wrong kind of education, or perhaps any education, would upset the balance of society and make the poor dissatisfied with their lot in life?

In the early eighteenth century, the twin threats of pauperism and moral delinquency among the lower orders had been met by the provision of 'schools of industry' to eliminate pauperism, and catechetical instruction to reform the poor,⁴⁷ both of which were financed by the newly discovered principle of the joint stock company.⁴⁸ The tremendous success that the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge enjoyed in the early years of the century well illustrates the support that was forthcoming from those who felt the need to protect the established order. While the schools provided by the Society varied greatly in organisation and methods, they were all alike in their indoctrination of the poor in the principles

⁴⁶Briggs, op. cit., p. 194.

⁴⁷M. G. Jones, The Charity School Movement in the Eighteenth Century, Frank Cass and Co., London, 1964. pp. 29-32.

⁴⁸Helen Wodehouse, A Survey of the History of Education, Edward Arnold and Co., London, 1930. p. 141.

of the Established Church and in the habits of respect for the King and for rank. By 1760, it has been estimated that some 30,000 students were attending the schools of the S.P.C.K.,⁴⁹ a significant but not large proportion of the child population.

In the last quarter of the century, the whole question of the state of the poor and what was to be done both for and about them was revived with a renewed and intense interest. There were arguments about population growth and what the results of such a growth would be. The increased mobility of the poor and the beginnings of industrialisation and urbanisation had made the social evils of the life of the poor more obvious than ever before. The great shock given to the established order by the French Revolution caused many people to have second thoughts about the stability of their own social and political structure.⁵⁰ Finally, towards the end of the century, there was a new interest in the nature of childhood,⁵¹ which, together with the growth of what Halévy calls sentimental humanitarianism,⁵² caused many of the wealthy to favour some kind of education for the poor.

The most important educational manifestation of this revived interest in the poor was the enthusiasm and support which poured forth for the Sunday School movement. Due to the skilful propagandising of the movement by Robert Raikes in his Gloucester Journal and the valuable

⁴⁹H. C. Barnard, A Short History of English Education, 1760 - 1944. University of London Press, London, 1957. p. 7.

⁵⁰Jones, op. cit., pp. 143-146.

⁵¹Halévy, op. cit., pp. 528-529.

⁵²Ibid.

support of Mr. Sylvanus Urban, editor of the Gentleman Magazine,⁵³ Sunday schools soon came to be regarded as the chief solution to the problem of the poor. In 1786, for example, the Dean of Lincoln asserted, "The measure which seems to me to possess the invaluable antidote to the poisonous manners of this depraved age is the establishment of Sunday Schools."⁵⁴

In 1785, the Sunday School Society was formed. Ten years later, its chairman reported that some 65,000 persons were being instructed.⁵⁵ By 1800, the numbers given in the Society's annual report had risen to 156,400,⁵⁶ and by 1818, a parliamentary committee estimated that nearly half a million were in attendance at Sunday schools.⁵⁷

This phenomenal growth is not hard to understand. Sunday schools were, after all, an extremely cheap form of education for the poor and supporting them an equally inexpensive method of salving one's conscience. Moreover, if one is to credit contemporary sources, they were extremely effective as a means of social control.⁵⁸ Finally, they took up just one day in the week, and that the day on which the children were the biggest social problem. A form of education that did not interfere with the labour supply and the earnings of the children was bound to be popular with both

⁵³As the impact of the French Revolution made itself felt, The Gentleman Magazine adopted a more neutral approach to the movement.

⁵⁴'Charge of the Reverend Dean of Lincoln to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham;' cited in The Gentleman Magazine, 1786, Vol. I. p. 257.

⁵⁵The Gentleman Magazine, 1795, Vol. II. p. 785.

⁵⁶Ibid., 1800, Vol. II. p. 791.

⁵⁷Guy Kendall, Robert Raikes, A Critical Study, Nicholson and Watson, London, 1939. p. 148.

⁵⁸H. Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838, pp. 114-116.

employers and parents.

The enthusiasm with which children attended the schools is harder to understand. Sunday was the only day of the week that the children of the poor could call their own. Yet, all over the country, they flocked into the schools, sitting through the interminable sermons and catechising, struggling through such meaty fare as Fox on Public Worship, The Divine Songs of Doctor Watts and Mann's Catechism. Doubtless the novelty of the schools, attendance prizes, and occasional offers of food and clothing were important reasons for the schools' popularity. At the same time, there existed a real desire, both among parents and children, for some kind of elementary education which would give them the chance to improve their lot in life. For example, Hannah More and her sister discovered in recruiting the children of the Mendip miners for their Sunday school that the most powerful argument was one stressing the better jobs as servants available to those who could read, say their catechism, and thus gain a degree of respectability.⁵⁹

Like the schools of the S.P.C.K., the Sunday schools tended to identify Christian duty with the preservation of the existing order. The Sunday schools were much more than "a rescue movement to save the souls of the children of the very poor."⁶⁰ The religious impulse which led to establishment of Sunday schools was supplemented by an equally important social consideration. Sunday schools would not only save souls; they would help to give stability to society. As the chairman of the

⁵⁹Martha More (ed. W. Roberts), The Mendip Annals, The Journal of Martha More, James Nisbett and Co. London, 1859. p. 62.

⁶⁰Jones, op. cit., p. 144.

Sunday School Society pointed out in 1795,

Sunday Schools will not fail, under Divine Blessing, to teach that 'fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom', and to steadily inculcate the duties of sobriety, industry, temperance, and subordination, as well as a due regard to, and observance for, the Christian Sabbath.⁶¹

Indeed, in many of the writings on education at the end of the century, we see a recapitulation of arguments put forward earlier in the century about the providential nature of society. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, for example, in her widely read The Economy of Charity, echoed Soame Jenyn's arguments. God created gentry, tradespeople and the poor for the good of the whole. Each rank has its own particular virtue, and it is the task of education to fit each for its special function in society. For the poor, Sunday Schools and Schools of Industry are to be recommended.⁶²

As in the past, there were those who felt that even a little education was too much. Some of the most telling attacks on the Sunday schools came from the pen of Eusebius, a correspondent of The Gentleman Magazine. In his initial attack, in 1797, he pointed out that schools were of little use in preventing crime and immorality.

The practice of mankind, we must confess, is most effectually controlled by the laws of society than by the sanctions of a future state; and I am sorry to say that the fear of the gallows operates more strongly on the multitude than the fear of God.⁶³

Moreover, teaching the poor even elementary reading and writing can have dangerous consequences. Learning "infuses a spirit of ambition" and makes

⁶¹'Report to the General Meeting of the Sunday School Society,' 1795, cited in The Gentleman Magazine, 1795, Vol. II. p. 785.

⁶²See Kendall, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

⁶³The Gentleman Magazine, 1797, Vol. II. pp. 819-820.

the poor man desire "a state of more ease and emolument."⁶⁴ As a result, "there are perhaps more criminals among the class of men who have had a superficial education than those who have never been taught either to read or write."⁶⁵ He concluded his letter with a passage that might well have come right out of Soame Jenyn's famous treatise.

A man of no literature will seldom attempt to form insurrections, or plan an idle scheme for the reformation of the State.His ignorance is a balm that soothes his mind into stupidity and repose, and excludes every emotion of discontent, pride and ambition.⁶⁶

Sunday schools are, therefore, "subversive to that order, that industry, that peace and tranquillity which constitute the happiness of society."⁶⁷

These contentions of Eusebius were not the isolated opinions of an eccentric individual; they represented the feelings of an important segment of society. In 1801, a correspondent signing himself A Southern Faunist put forward essentially the same viewpoint.

The circumstances of the people having got worse since the establishment of these institutions proves that they are injurious rather than useful; J.G. [a previous correspondent] must acknowledge that if reading had not been by them rendered so general the baleful influence of Thomas Paine's work could not have been so extensive.⁶⁸

However, such views were minority ones and the predominant belief at the end of the century was that in education lay the panacea for the social ills that had become so evident in the last few decades.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 1801, Vol. II. p. 896.

Two problems presented themselves, the lack of teachers and, of course, the lack of funds. The enthusiastic reception given to the monitorial systems of Bell and Lancaster is explainable in terms of their being solutions to these two problems, though, at the time, exaggerated claims were made about their effectiveness. They were believed to make possible rapid and accurate teaching of whatever was thought desirable, provided that the subject matter was organised correctly. Discipline problems were non-existent. Moreover, the systems suited the mechanistic spirit of the age, which was fully aware of the benefits to be enjoyed from the division of labour. As Thomas Bernard glowingly reported:

The grand principle of Dr. Bell's system is the division of labour applied to intellectual purposes.It is the division of labour in his schools, that leaves the master the easy task of directing the movements of the whole machine, instead of toiling ineffectually at a single part. The principle in manufactories, and in schools is the same.⁶⁹

Out of the generally recognised need for some kind of education for the poor and the 'discoveries' of Bell and Lancaster arose the British and Foreign Schools Society, representing the interests of the Non-conformists, and the National Society for the Education of the Poor, representing those of the Established Church. The societies operated both day and Sunday schools and achieved spectacular successes, if numbers are any criterion. By 1830, for example, the 'National Society' had 3,670 schools with about 346,000 students in attendance.⁷⁰

Up to the time of Hannah More's death, and for many people for a long time after, the main inspirations of these movements for popular

⁶⁹The Society for the Bettering of the Condition of the Poor, (ed. Thomas Bernard), Of the Education of the Poor, W. Bulmer and Co., London, 1809, pp. 34-36.

⁷⁰Curtis, op. cit., p. 208.

education were the need to present a religious viewpoint to the poor and the desire to preserve the social and political structure.

In conflict with those who sought to maintain the eighteenth century social and political structure were those who were inspired by what may be called an Ideal of Progress. Even the landed classes had been infected with enthusiasm for agricultural improvement and more efficient methods of production. The agrarian revolution, with its new techniques, new crops, new machines and enclosures, was producing important social changes. In fact, the improving landlords were playing a leading role in the breakup of the very society they were so interested in preserving.⁷¹

If, among the upper orders, this spirit of innovation and change was in conflict with their political and social views, there was no such ambivalence among the rising class of industrial capitalists. For them, the scientific movement of the seventeenth century, the refreshing clarity and commonsense of Locke, the universal belief in Nature and the natural order, and the rationalist spirit of the age had led, not to a desire to preserve the status quo, but to the realisation that, if the right changes were made, a better world could be created, a world where thrift, industry and Godliness went hand in hand to assure all men happiness and prosperity.

By the end of the century, a philosophical creed for this 'progress ideal' had been formulated. To the powerful arguments of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* were added those of a whole new school of political and social thought.

To articulate the creed of progress, to state its evidences and to draw out its implications, was the mission of that remarkable

⁷¹Briggs, op. cit., pp. 39-42.

group of men variously known as the Utilitarians, or the Philosophical Radicals.Bentham's alliance with James Mill, Mill's friendship with Malthus and Ricardo, had created a party, almost a sect, with formularies as compact as the Evangelical theology, and conclusions not less inexorable.⁷²

It was this group which was to make philosophically respectable what the middle classes wanted to hear.

By industry, and abstinence, the employer may enlarge the market for his goods; by industry, and continence, the workman may increase the purchasing power, and limit the numbers of his class: progress, like salvation, is the reward of virtue; of diligence and self-education; of providence and self-control.⁷³

Young has stated that the dominant forces in the making of Victorian England were the two movements of Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism.⁷⁴ If Hannah More had little interest in or sympathy for the former movement, she was herself a key figure in the latter. Indeed, the most important single strand of English history for Hannah More was the Evangelical revival within the Church of England.

It is important that a distinction be made between two quite separate movements which have often been confused and called together the Evangelical revival. There were, in fact, two revivals, one within the Church and one without. The latter movement, Methodism, though it had certain connections with and exercised a considerable influence on the revival within the Church, was and remained a separate religious organisation, clearly apart from the Church of England.

⁷²G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age, Oxford University Press, London, 1963. p. 8.

⁷³Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 1-12.

That Methodists and Evangelicals should have been confused is not surprising. They were both reacting against the same aspects of eighteenth century life and religion. For both of them, the whole moral and religious tone of society contradicted the principles of true Christianity. The latitudinarian theological climate of the age favoured a religion of the head rather than the heart and was hardly conducive to a 'vital' religion; reasonableness rather than experience was the test of religious belief. The growing identification of the clergy with the landed classes,⁷⁵ government influence on the higher clergy,⁷⁶ pluralism, non-residence, and a failure of the Church to expand the area of its operations to fit the demographic changes that were occurring meant that the Church was slowly but surely losing contact with the mass of the people. For the 'serious-minded', whether Methodist or Evangelical, such a standard of morality, such a spirit of religion, and such a state of affairs in the Church could not be allowed to continue.

It is against this background that the work of Whitfield and Wesley must be viewed. Wesley's untiring energy, his genius in borrowing and adapting methods of organisation, and his great devotion to his 'cause' assured the success of Methodism among the lower orders. By the end of the century, Methodism had revitalised dissent, which previously had had "less spiritual life than the Church,"⁷⁷ and was unquestionably a dominant spiritual and moral force in the country. By 1813, there were 231,000

⁷⁵Sykes, op. cit., pp. 379-380, and Best, op. cit. pp. 59-74.

⁷⁶Sykes, op. cit., pp. 41-91.

⁷⁷G. R. Balleine, History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1933. p. 17.

Methodists within the organisation and many more on the 'fringes.'⁷⁸

Yet Methodism was essentially a movement apart from the Church of England; it was always what it was eventually to become, a form of Dissent. From the outset of his great ministry, Wesley continually ignored Church order and discipline. The creation of a highly complex, very authoritarian and immensely powerful organisation⁷⁹ meant that "in fact, an embryo had formed within the womb of the Establishment, with John Wesley as its visible head."⁸⁰ It would not be long before this embryo achieved a separate existence apart from the womb. There is, too, a discernible difference to be seen in the theology of Methodism and Evangelicalism. Generally speaking the Evangelicals tended to be moderate Calvinists, while the Arminianism of Wesley is well known. Much more important were the social distinctions between the two movements, both in the origins of their leaders and the classes affected by each movement. Methodism made its appeal to and received its support from the lower and lower middle orders, and its itinerant preachers came from the same background. So close was the identification of Methodism and the lower orders that, at the end of the century, Methodists with social pretensions and ambitions began to desert the chapel for the parish church. Unlike Evangelicalism, Methodism failed to make any appeal to the upper orders

Ford K. Brown, in a caustic, but in many ways correct, analysis of

⁷⁸Halévy, op. cit., p. 415.

⁷⁹R. Knox, Enthusiasm, Oxford University Press, New York, 1961, pp. 426-430, and J. H. Overton, The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century, Longmans, Green and Co. London, 1907. pp. 53-58.

⁸⁰Knox, op. cit., p. 427.

Wesley's mission, concludes that, in as much as it was aimed at the reformation of society, it was a failure.

It may be admirable, in some abstract manner, that to the mind of Wesley, J. Fletcher of Madely and their associates, it was as good to rescue from sin and infidelity a miner, orange-girl or cobbler as a banker, great merchant, duchess, East India magnate or Member of Parliament. If one is planning on the reform of a nation such as England in the eighteenth century, it is not admirable at all; it is mere folly.⁸¹

Of course, such a view of Wesley's life work is very incomplete. Wesley and his followers were not out to reform society; their aim was to preach the gospel to as many as would listen, and bring salvation to as many people as possible. The reformation of society, if it figured at all as a conscious aim of Wesley, was considered a kind of by-product that might occur later. Nevertheless, when Wesley told his followers, "You are no more to have the manners of a gentleman than a dancing master,"⁸² he had admitted that Methodism had no place in the polite society of 'those who counted'. To reform the upper orders and change the moral and religious climate of England was the avowed intention of the Evangelicals.

Thus, in the pages that follow, the term 'Evangelical' will be used to describe those 'serious minded' people who embraced a truly 'vital religion' and remained devout Anglicans; it will not be applied to Methodists.

Though there were several minor eddies of religious awakening up and down England throughout the century, until the last fifteen years of the century, there was no Evangelical party within the Church. The early

⁸¹Brown, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

⁸²Ibid. p. 48.

Evangelicals operated quite independently of one another and certainly apart from Methodism. Their success was achieved among the lower orders and they showed little inclination to achieve preferment. Thus, James Hervey, 1714-1758, William Grimshaw of Haworth, 1708-1763, and John Berridge of Everton, 1716-1793, were all devout Evangelicals, and initiated religious revivals in their parishes.⁸³ Yet none achieved preferment, none carried any influence among those who counted, and none achieved any more than local success. Romaine, Henry Venn and John Newton are further examples of Evangelical clergy who did much to further the cause of 'true religion' in their parishes. But they too lacked the necessary qualifications of birth and influence to achieve any success among the upper orders of society. Important as these local revivals were, they could never hope to result in the reform of a nation.

In 1785, although there were Evangelical clergy scattered all over England and several important converts had been made, "as a group, they had no clear direction, no organisation, no programme, no means, no resources, no propaganda, no numbers, no power."⁸⁴ With the conversion of William Wilberforce, his tacit leadership of the Evangelicals with whom he was acquainted, and the formation of the Clapham Sect, they had all of these.

Before the turn of the century, the evangelical commanders had had begun to win over to their campaign important peers and peeresses,

⁸³For brief biographical studies of the leading early Evangelicals, see Overton, op. cit. pp. 59-88, and Balleine, op. cit. pp. 50-146.

⁸⁴Brown, op. cit., p. 2.

Members of Parliament and government, High Church clergymen, affluent merchants, bankers and industrialists, influential men in the services and professions.⁸⁵

By 1820, the Evangelicals whose names appeared on the subscription lists of innumerable charitable enterprises made up "a long and glittering muster role of the wealthy, highly placed and socially powerful."⁸⁶

The 'central committee' of the party became known as the Clapham Sect, a small but wealthy and influential body of laymen who lived in and around Clapham. Its leading members were William Wilberforce, Samuel, Robert and Henry Thornton, the Macaulays and Hannah More, who, although she did not live at Clapham, spent much of her time in London visiting her friends there.

The methods that the Evangelicals were to employ to achieve a reformation of the Church and society were several. Ceaseless proselytising, setting up and acquiring control of societies for moral and spiritual reform, winning over the higher clergy, an enormous and hitherto unknown use of propaganda, the use of great amounts of money, and of course, energy were the principal weapons in the armoury of the Evangelicals.⁸⁷ Underlying all these methods, there was a carefully planned strategy, which their opponents correctly diagnosed as 'Evangelical cunning'.

Although the Evangelicals "declined to speculate on the niceties of doctrine",⁸⁸ they were in no doubt as to what constituted and what did not constitute a true Christian life. Their literature is full of references to 'nominal Christians' who, while observing the outward forms of being Christians, lacked that 'seriousness' of outlook and conduct that

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁸⁸Halévy, op. cit., p. 437.

was the sign of a 'vital' religion.

Their own lives were strictly ordered. Every hour, every shilling belonged to God. They prayed, they worked, they gave alms, they performed their deeds of charity....living all their lives 'in the great Taskmaster's eye'.⁸⁹

They were, in many ways, ascetic, and propounded a rigid 'Thou Shalt Not' philosophy. Extravagant clothes and hairstyles, cards, dancing, the theatre, novels, tobacco and strong drink were all targets for their attacks on vice and error, while duelling, bloodsports, profanity and failure to observe the Sabbath were considered strong evidence that Satan was firmly in control. Life for the Evangelical was a testing ground for a greater life to come, where all wrongs would be righted, all pain cease and all loved ones be united in everlasting joy. To a certain extent, this explains their, to us, morbid preoccupation with death-beds, to which were brought young and old for a timely reminder of the mortality of man and the peace vouchsafed to those who were 'saved'.

Yet this other-worldliness did not mean that they were uninterested in the affairs of this life. It was not enough merely to have lived; one must have lived well. All God's chosen people had their particular 'calling', a divine mission given them by God. Indeed, it was this unshakeable belief in the divine nature of their work that enabled them to perform what can only be described as minor miracles.⁹⁰

Unlike the Methodists, their support of the established order was not passive, but wholehearted and extremely active. They were, in fact,

⁸⁹S. C. Carpenter, Church and People, 1789-1889, S. P. C. K., London, 1959. Vol. I. p. 28.

⁹⁰Consider, for example, Wilberforce's perseverance in his attempts to have the slave trade abolished in the face of so many disappointments, and his eventual success.

part of this order, and, although they wished to see its religion and morals reformed, they had no desire to see it replaced with a 'Godless republicanism' or even a liberal democracy. Many critics of the Evangelicals have thought they detected a certain ambivalence in the Evangelical view of politics and the social order. Wilberforce's success in abolishing the slave trade and the Evangelicals' espousal of any cause which alleviated the lot of the poor led many radicals and reformers to believe that here was a force that would press for the reforms needed to eradicate the underlying causes of poverty and economic distress. They failed to see that the Evangelicals were acting mainly out of religious motives, and that it was these motives which led them to devote their time and money to humanitarian and charitable enterprises. It is only when we forget what the ultimate aims and motives of the Evangelicals were, that Wilberforce's full approval of the Combination Acts and his failure to denounce the Peterloo massacre seem to be hypocritical. Thus, Wilberforce and the Evangelicals did not protest over the oppression of India; their primary concern was to see that Bibles and missions were provided for the natives.⁹¹ Nor has Hannah More escaped criticism. She has been censured both for her condescension toward the poor and her acceptance of the evils of poverty. The Hammonds, for example, discussing Hannah More's and her sister, Martha's, work among the poor of their district, wrote,

It never seems to have crossed the minds of these philanthropists that it was desirable that men and women should have decent wages, or decent homes, or that there was something wrong with the arrangement of a society that left the mass of the people in this plight.⁹²

⁹¹Halévy, op. cit., pp. 448-450.

⁹²J. L. and B. Hammond, The Town Labourer, 1760-1832, Longmans, Green, & Co., New York, 1920. pp. 226-226.

But the Evangelicals were not and never pretended to be social or political reformers. They were conservatives, accepting the eighteenth century notions of rank, necessary subordination and the supremacy of the landed classes as being inevitable and the best possible arrangements in a very imperfect world.

The puritanical beliefs of the Evangelicals, their attempts to infiltrate the Church and reform it, and their increasing influence in society provoked a strong reaction. Even though they were among the most fervent supporters of the established order,

drubbing the saints became a fashionable diversion in orthodox conservative circles, to which their more ecclesiastical organs, 'the British Critic (established in 1793) and the Christian Remembrancer (founded in 1819) gleefully devoted a great deal of their space right up to the time of the reform bill.⁹³

The enmity of the bench "reached its climax in Bishop Marsh's celebrated 'trap for Calvinists', the eighty seven questions he put to candidates for ordination, institutions, or licenses, within his diocese of Peterborough."⁹⁴ From another quarter came the fierce attacks of that fanatical defender of the Establishment, The Anti-Jacobin, which recognised, or thought it recognised, that there were 'Methodists in the Church', hostile to its principles and very existence.⁹⁵ The old seventeenth century fear of puritans (after all, they had sent Archbishop Laud to his death) among the High Church party was enough to give rise to the cry of 'the Church in danger'.

If the Evangelicals found little support among the Establishment, this was nothing compared to the vehemence with which they were attacked

⁹³Best, op. cit., p. 243.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Infra. Chapter V. p. 116-119.

by the radicals and reformers. Cobbett, for example, in his Cobbett's Annual Register, and later in his Cobbett's Political Register, denounced Evangelicalism first as an orthodox churchman and later as an anti-clerical radical.⁹⁶

If the Evangelical party was wealthy, influential and powerful, the forces of the enemy were, if anything, stronger, and it is hardly surprising that the attempt to 'take over' the Church and completely reform society failed. It was not surprising to the Evangelicals themselves. They expected nothing from this world but trials and tribulations, disappointments and tears. To carry out one's calling to the best of one's ability was all that was required of the Christian.

Yet the results of Evangelicalism were profound. The Evangelicals were largely responsible for the abolition of the slave trade. Most of the religious and humanitarian societies formed at the end of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth were directly or indirectly associated with the Evangelicals.⁹⁷ They played a leading role in the setting up and support of Sunday Schools. Evangelicalism was an important, perhaps the most important, "tributary sending down its flood of improving, moralising ideas and energy towards the ocean of early Victorian respectability and public probity."⁹⁸ The threat of an Evangelical 'take over' of the Church had forced many of the higher clergy to come to

⁹⁶Infra., Chapter V. pp. 121-122.

⁹⁷For example, The Religious Tract Society, 1799, The Naval and Military Bible Society, 1780, The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1804, The London Missionary Society, 1795, and The Church Mission Society, 1799, were all controlled by Evangelicals. See Overton, op. cit. pp. 134-140.

⁹⁸Best, op. cit., p. 143.

grips with things, to realise that an efficient and alive parochial system must lay at the base of a vigorous yet stable Church. During periods of social and political unrest, they had stood solidly behind the forces of government and made good use of their influence, talent and money on behalf of law and order. The influence, example and writings of Wilberforce, Hannah More and other Evangelicals had had their effect, and the "Victorian Age had escaped a heritage it could easily have had."⁹⁹ As Halévy points out, the Evangelicals "exercised on the upper classes a direct influence akin to that exercised by the Methodists on the masses."¹⁰⁰ By opening the eyes of the rich and powerful to the condition of the poor, and by encouraging them to assist in works of benevolence and charity, the Evangelicals had helped make possible that massive voluntarism which characterised nineteenth century solutions to social problems.

This Evangelical 'inheritance' is best summed up by Young.

The Evangelicals gave to the island a creed which was at once the basis of its morality and the justification of its wealth and power, and with that creed, that sense of being an Elect People which, set to a more blatant tune, became a principal element in late Victorian Imperialism. By about 1830 their work was done. They had driven the grosser kinds of cruelty, extravagance, and profligacy underground. They had established a certain level of behaviour for all who wished to stand well with their fellows. In moralising society, they had made social disapproval a force which the boldest sinner might fear. ...Evangelicalism had imposed on society, even on those classes that were indifferent to its religious basis and unaffected by its economic appeal, its code of Sabbath observance, responsibility, and philanthropy; of discipline in the home, regularity in affairs; it had created a technique of private persuasion and social persecution.¹⁰¹

This, then was the world of Hannah More. It was a world which consisted of powerful forces of conservatism and increasingly powerful

⁹⁹Brown, op. cit., p. 521.

¹⁰⁰Halévy, op. cit., p. 450.

¹⁰¹Young, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

forces of change. Politically and socially, for almost all of Hannah More's life, England was a static society. Yet during that period, economic, social and intellectual changes and the French revolution were weakening the foundations of eighteenth century society. It was a world which experienced a great change in its moral and religious ethos, and by the time Hannah More died, Georgian and Regency England was already a thing of the past. It is within the context of these events, movements, beliefs and prejudices that the life, opinions and work of Hannah More must be examined and judged.

CHAPTER III

"THE BISHOP IN PETTICOATS"¹

Hannah More was born on February 2, 1745, at the village of Fishponds, about four miles from Bristol. She was the youngest but one of five sisters. Her father, Jacob More, a staunch High Church Tory, had obtained the mastership of a foundation school at Fishponds some years before his marriage. His wife, the daughter of a local farmer, was a woman "of plain education" yet both intelligent and pious.² The family occupied a portion of the school-building, and it is hardly surprising that the school-house and the church were two of the earliest and most important influences on the young Hannah More.

The sisters were educated at home by their mother and, though they all received a more academic education than most young girls of their time, the chief concern of their parents was to inculcate in their children habits of industry. Thus, "housework was drilled into them as thoroughly as Latin conjugations."³ It appears that the family had agreed that the girls, as soon as they were old enough, would leave home and open a boarding school for young ladies. With this in mind, the eldest sister, Mary, was sent to a 'French school' in Bristol, so that modern languages could be added to the curriculum of the proposed school.

¹William Cobbett's epithet for Hannah More. Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, 20 April 1822. Cited in M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952, p. 204.

²William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I. p. 7.

³M. A. Hopkins, Hannah More and Her Circle, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1947. p. 11.

Hannah soon proved to be the 'genius' of the family and it speaks highly of her personality that, in spite of this handicap, she was to remain the favorite of her sisters, who fussed over her for the rest of their lives. She could read by the time she was three and before her fifth birthday was writing short poems.⁴ When she was eight, her father decided to teach his infant prodigy himself and embarked on teaching her an ambitious course of mathematics, Greek and Latin. Her success in mastering mathematics was so rapid and so great that her father thought it best to discontinue the lessons, apparently feeling that too great a knowledge of this subject was unsuitable for a young girl. By the time she was twelve, she was well versed in the classics, history and geography. She had acquired a good working knowledge of French from her sister and a group of French officers, who, though prisoners, were allowed the run of the neighbourhood and often visited the More family. She had also been subjected to a thorough indoctrination in the strictest form of High Church Anglicanism.

In 1757, thanks to the generous help of several wealthy and influential families,⁵ the long-planned boarding school for girls was opened, and the five sisters made their way to Bristol. Mary, Elizabeth and Sarah, aged nineteen, seventeen and fourteen respectively, were to do the teaching, while the younger sisters, Hannah and Martha, attended classes in preparation for the time when they would be old enough to join the teaching force.

⁴H. Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838, p. 6.

⁵Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

The school prospered; "five well educated school-mistresses of piety and high character put it in a class by itself. Bristol citizens sent their daughters and even their sons in their tender years."⁶ By 1767, the school had extended its clientele to include the gentry and some families of rank, and it became necessary to move to more commodious premises.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the influence of her sisters on the growing Hannah. Mary took her responsibilities for the upbringing of the younger sisters very seriously. She was extremely religious, in the puritan tradition of her grandmother,⁷ and took great pains to ensure that Hannah's genius should not be perverted by too much secular study at the expense of a training in 'sound' religious principles.

The strict religious views of the sisters did not prevent them from rapidly winning the friendship of a large number of important local men and women of influence. "They were born politicians, instinctively liking the right people",⁸ and Hannah, particularly, at a very young age, gained a wide circle of friends and admirers. When she was sixteen, due to a highly flattering poem she had written on his talents, she was able to meet and forge a lasting friendship with the elder Sheridan and his family. Before she was seventeen, she had become acquainted with Ferguson, the

⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 9

⁷According to Roberts, the parents of Jacob More were Puritans who had lived through the days of persecution and had been forced to hold their services in a house with an armed man at the door to prevent spies gaining admittance. See Roberts, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

⁸Hopkins, op. cit., p. 29.

popular astronomer, Tucker, the political economist, and a whole bevy of elder men friends who were noted for their intellect and learning.⁹

In 1762, while teaching at the boarding school, she attempted her first important literary work, a pastoral drama, entitled The Search After Happiness. The careful training of parents and her sister, Mary, had not been wasted, and the drama "rather more moral than dramatic",¹⁰ was pious in the extreme. As Hannah More later confessed, it was intended to be "a substitute for the very improper custom, which then prevailed, of allowing plays, and those not always of the purer kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools."¹¹ Despite this, it was a considerable success and, by 1787, had sold over 10,000 copies. Several of the poems from the drama were published in The Annual Register of 1773, a considerable honour for an eighteen year old girl from the provinces.¹²

By the time Hannah was twenty, she was a very attractive woman, well versed in the classics and in French, Spanish and Italian. She was an excellent conversationalist with a large circle of eminent men friends, was well-known locally as a literary figure and had developed an unerring ability to win respect and friendship.

She was soon engaged to be married. Not surprisingly, she chose a man considerably older than herself, a Mr. Turner, whose sole claim to fame is that three times he postponed the wedding day and, in effect,

⁹Roberts, op. cit., pp. 24-25, Jones, op. cit., pp. 13-15, and Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 25-28.

¹⁰Thompson. op. cit., p. 12.

¹¹Hannah More, Works, D. Graisberry, London, 1803, Vol. I. p. 364.

¹²Annual Register, 1773, Fifth edition, 1803. pp. 236-238.

jilted the young Hannah.¹³ The significance of this unhappy episode in her life was considerable. In the first place, Mr. Turner, who continued to profess his undying admiration for Hannah, could not be dissuaded from conferring upon her an annuity of £200 per annum. Although she refused the offer, her friends arranged the matter for her, and from then on she found herself free from the necessity of teaching for a living, able to devote her whole time to literary pursuits. Secondly, the affair seems to have decided her to remain single. Although she would still use her considerable charms to win friends among the wealthy and influential, they were all to be kept emotionally 'at arms length'. Perhaps this explains why she was able to win and retain the friendship of so many single and married men and their wives.

In 1773, with two of her sisters, she made her first visit to London. Here, as in Bristol, she soon succeeded in gaining admittance to the best circles. Due to flattering remarks and a poem she had written on the talents of David Garrick, she was introduced to the great actor, now in his declining years. They immediately took to one another, Garrick becoming one of the most important influences on her life. Naturally, her entrée to London society was now assured. "In the course of six weeks (for that was the limit of their visit), she had become intimate with the greatest names in intellect and taste."¹⁴ She met and became friends with Sir Joshua Reynolds and his daughter, Edmund Burke, Doctor Samuel Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, Mrs. Montague, and many other literary figures. After

¹³Roberts, op. cit., pp. 28-29, and Thompson, op. cit., pp. 17-20

¹⁴Thompson, op. cit., p. 24.

1773, her life is spelled out in detail in the vast correspondence she maintained with her friends and sisters.

The meeting with Burke was of particular significance. The following year, during the famous Bristol election of 1774, she gave all her support to his candidacy, and was at least partially responsible for his success. It is quite possible that her contacts with Burke provided her with many of the political and social ideas she later incorporated into her Cheap Repository Tracts.¹⁵ Certainly, the epithet applied to them, 'Burke for Beginners',¹⁶ is not at all inappropriate.

From 1773 on, it became a custom for Miss More to spend the greater part of the year in Bristol and the rest in London with her literary friends, who grew in numbers as the years passed by. During this period of her life, there was a certain ambivalence in her attitude to London life and society. On the one hand, it is obvious from her letters that she delighted in the opulence of the houses, the elegance of the way of life and the opportunities for meeting famous people. There can be no doubt that she thoroughly enjoyed life among the great. In 1776, she wrote to her sisters, "Keeping bad company leads to all sorts of other bad things. I have got the headache today, by raking out with that gay libertine, Johnson."¹⁷ Allowing for the fact that Miss More could never, in her whole life, be said to have gone out 'raking' and that Doctor Johnson can hardly be considered a 'libertine', it is still apparent that Hannah found 'the gay life' extremely exciting and stimulating.

¹⁵Infra, Chapter VI.

¹⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁷Hannah More to her sisters, 1776, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p.56.

However, her strict religious upbringing would not allow her to approve of much that she saw about her in London society. She found the extravagant fashions in hairstyles and clothes "ridiculous excesses", and small-pox no more "disfiguring than the present mode of dressing."¹⁸ "Going to the opera," she insisted, "like getting drunk, is a sin that carries its own punishment with it, and that a very severe one."¹⁹ The rich, she discovered, were not necessarily suitable friends and acquaintances. Her disapproval of the manners of the great found expression in almost every letter she wrote home to her sisters.²⁰

Yet at this stage of her life, the extravagance and 'paganism' of London society was not condemned on solely religious grounds, but also because they were, for her, completely uninteresting and slightly ridiculous. The nature of the criticism which Miss More levelled at the social mores of London society is best illustrated in a letter she wrote to her sisters in 1776. It is certainly not criticism on religious grounds, yet a certain puritanical element can be detected.

Again I am annoyed by the foolish absurdity of the present mode of dress. Some ladies carry on their heads a large quantity of fruit, and yet they would despise a poor useful member of society, who carried it there for the purpose of selling it for bread. Some, at the back of their perpendicular caps, hang four or five ostrich feathers, of different colours, etc. Spirit of Addison! thou pure and gentle shade, arise! thou who, with such fine humour, and such polished sarcasm, didst lash the cherry-coloured hood, and the party patches; and cut down, with a trenchant sickle, a whole harvest of follies and absurdities! awake! for the follies thou didst lash but were the beginning of follies; and the absurdities thou didst censure, were but

¹⁸Hannah More to her sisters, 1775, Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁹Hannah More to her sisters, 1775, Ibid., p. 44.

²⁰Hannah More to her sisters, 1776, Ibid., p. 60.

the seeds of absurdities! Oh, that thy master-spirit, speaking and chiding in thy graceful page, could recall the blushes, and collect the scattered and mutilated remnants of female modesty.²¹

The puritan strain was present, but it had not yet blossomed into the Evangelicalism of her later years. The final illness of David Hume, for example, called forth none of her later Evangelical death-bed oratory, only a comment that he was "at the point of death."²²

Her disapproval of much of London society did nothing to hamper her career. By 1776, she was already an established literary figure. In 1775, her first major play, The Inflexible Captive, was performed at the popular resort of Bath. Sally, her sister, described the play's reception thus:

All the world of dukes, lords and barons were there. I sat next a duke and a lord. All expressed the highest approbation of the whole. Never was a piece represented there known to have received so much applause.²³

The following year, she produced her masterpiece, the tragedy Percy. Modern comment on the play is unflattering, to say the least.²⁴ Yet the play, performed at Covent Garden in 1777, was the biggest success for many years, running twenty-one consecutive evenings, an almost unheard of occurrence.²⁵ Miss More found herself lionised by all of London. She was visited and complimented by Earl Percy, editor of the Reliques, and people

²¹Hannah More to her sisters, 1776, Ibid., p. 50.

²²Hannah More to her sisters, 1776, Ibid., p. 59.

²³Thompson, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁴H. V. Routh, for example, considers the play "artificial and insipid," but admits that, at that time, its "combination of emotion, action and theory was considered a revelation." A. Ward and A. R. Waller, (editors), Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge University Press, London, 1961, Vol. XI. pp. 273-274.

²⁵Jones, op. cit., p. 35.

of rank and considerable influence flocked to see her and pay their respects. The play was translated and performed all over the continent. On the strength of this one dramatic effort, she was made a member of the Academy of Arts, Sciences and Belles Lettres at Rouen.²⁶

The success of Percy encouraged her to write another tragedy, The Fatal Falsehood, which was produced in 1779. It was only a partial success. Its production marked the end of a period in Hannah More's life for she never again attended the theatre, not even to see her own plays, which were revived periodically throughout the eighteenth century.

The reasons for this abrupt break with a medium of entertainment to which she had previously devoted most of her time throw considerable light on the stage of religious development she had then reached. There was, it is true, an episode associated with the performance of The Fatal Falsehood, unpleasant enough to make anyone think twice before continuing in the theatre. During the opening performance of The Fatal Falsehood, a Mrs. Cowley had suddenly screamed out that the play was a plagiarised version of one of her own, which had failed to be produced. For the next month or so Miss More was subjected to a series of vehement denunciations by Mrs. Cowley, who sent letters to the popular magazines of the day. Though Miss More refused to 'join battle' and emerged from the whole ordeal with considerable credit, controversy never failed to upset her.²⁷

Far more important was her realisation that the theatre was not the proper vehicle for the presentation of a religious viewpoint. Even

²⁶Roberts, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

²⁷Thompson, op. cit., pp. 38-39, and Jones, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

the highly proper tragedies she had written had to deal with morality in terms of honour, love and revenge, and in her own words, this "dazzling system of worldly morality [was] in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are charity, meekness, peaceableness, long suffering and forgiveness."²⁸ As Cadell, her publisher, pointed out to her, she was "too good a Christian for an author."²⁹ She did make one last effort to reconcile the profane nature of the theatre with her particular view of religion. In 1782, she published her Sacred Dramas which dramatised events of Old Testament history. But, as she already knew, the stage was not the place for sacred drama; "the pious would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull."³⁰

Furthermore, the one person who might have kept her love of the theatre alive, David Garrick, had died just before The Fatal Falsehood was produced. The death of Garrick further rounded off this period of her life. It was he who had encouraged and developed her talent for drama, it was he who had introduced her into London society, and it was he who had been the main link that connected her with this society. His death broke the link and made it easier, as time went by, to escape from the pleasures and temptations of London life. It also influenced her religious development. Thompson's view that his death "affected her with that profound and ever-present conviction of the inestimable value of

²⁸Hannah More, Preface to the Tragedies, Works, Vol. II. p. 9.

²⁹Hannah More to her sister, 1780, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 146.

³⁰Hannah More, Advertisement for the Sacred Dramas, Works, Vol. I. p. 7.

time, in reference to the objects of eternity"³¹ is born out by the presence of a new tone in her correspondence. It is significant, for example, that her first long and detailed 'death-bed cum funeral' letter concerns Garrick.³²

But the break with London social life was not as sudden as that with the theatre. Her need for praise and adulation was still strong enough to make her accept the numerous invitations to large gatherings of influential persons of rank, even though she despised and disapproved of what went on there. She was, after all, a celebrity, and she found herself caught between the pleasures that her fame was capable of giving her and the growing conviction that London society was not only foolish and ridiculous, but extremely impious and irreligious. In 1782, in a letter to her sisters, she described a typical assembly, at the Bishop of St. Asaph's.

Conceive to yourself one hundred and fifty or two hundred people met together, dressed in the extremity of the fashion; painted as red as bacchanals; poisoning the air with perfumes; treading on each other's gowns; making the crowd they blame; not one in ten able to get a chair; protesting they are engaged to ten other places; and lamenting the fatigue they are not obliged to endure; ten or a dozen cardtables, crammed with dowagers of quality, grave ecclesiastics and yellow admirals; and you have an idea of an assembly.³³

In the same year, in another letter to her sisters, she laments the worsening ethos of town life, and finds that "the follies, and distresses and vices of this town, especially of the great world, throw a gloom over,

³¹Thompson, op. cit., p. 64.

³²Hannah More to her sisters, Jan. 1779. Roberts, op cit., Vol. I. pp. 123-126.

³³Hannah More to her sisters, 1782, Ibid., p. 196.

and sadden the spirit of pleasure in society."³⁴ By 1784, her disenchantment is complete and she writes, "I am absolutely resolved I will go to such parties no more."³⁵

Yet it was this period between 1779 and 1785 that her fame as a literary figure was at its height. She was, according to Doctor Johnson, 'the most powerful versificatrix in the English language' and the acknowledged poet of the Bas Bleu, that group of literary ladies, headed by such social giants as Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Walsingham, Lady Crewe, Mrs. Ord, Mrs. Monckton, Mrs. Thrale and Miss Burney. Her poems written in this period, Bas Bleu, Sensibility, Florio and Bishop Bonner's Ghost, were all warmly received and considerably enhanced her already high reputation.

The number of Miss More's friends in the early 'eighties is far too numerous to allow a detailed account of them to be given. It included a large number of influential men and women ranging from military and political figures like General Oglethorpe, General Howe and Lord North to literary figures such as Doctor Johnson and Horace Walpole. Increasingly during this period, one finds in her correspondence mention of contacts with the higher clergy. Shipley of St. Asaph, Watson of Llandaff, Horsley of Rochester, Horne, Dean of Canterbury and later Bishop of Norwich, Shute-Barrington, and the future Bishop of London, Beilby Porteus, could all be numbered among her friends by 1785.

The power and influence that this vast number of acquaintances

³⁴Ibid., p. 197.

³⁵Hannah More to her sisters, 1784 Ibid., p. 250.

gave Miss More is well illustrated by an episode in her life which occurred in 1784. It had been brought to her attention that a poverty-stricken Bristol milk-woman, a Mrs. Yeardsley, with five children and a worthless husband, had somehow managed to educate herself and was writing poetry of considerable promise. As a good member of the Bas Bleu and a Christian with a strong sense of responsibility for all the poor, Miss More decided that something must be done for the woman. She thus spent almost a year supervising the education of Mrs. Yeardsley and made sure that she and her family were well looked after. At the same time, she wrote to all her friends asking them to subscribe to a fund for the promotion of the milk-woman poet's work. By 1785, over one thousand names, headed by nine duchesses, were on the subscription list and over £500 already collected.³⁶ It was obvious that the influence of Miss More was a force to be reckoned with.

In the same year, her withdrawal from town life was made more concrete by her building a cottage, Cowslip Green, in the remote village of Wrington, about eleven miles from Bristol. In 1802, she built a larger, more comfortable house at Barley Wood, less than a mile from Cowslip Green. Henceforth, her summers were to be spent in the country, and her winters in Bath or London with her close friends. There can be little doubt that the chief motive of Miss More in moving to this remote spot was her dislike of the ethos of town life and a desire to 'get away from it all'. At the same time, her search for a more certain and vital religious faith could proceed unhampered by the distractions of this world.

³⁶Thompson, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

The gradual crystallisation of her religious beliefs is perhaps most clearly seen in her reading during this period. She had always been a voracious reader of both secular and religious works. After Garrick's death, however, purely religious works came to occupy a dominant position and those secular works she did read were all interpreted and judged from a religious viewpoint. The book which made the most profound impression was John Newton's Cardiphonia, in which she found "nothing but rational piety [and] vital experimental religion."³⁷ In 1782, she wrote to her sisters,

I am up to the ears in books. I have just finished six volumes of Jortin's sermons; elegant, but cold, and very low in doctrine, - 'plays round the head, but comes not near the heart'. Cardiphonia does; I like it much.³⁸

In 1785, she mentions having read South, Atterbury and Warburton, in whose writings she found "many passages of scripture presented in a strong and striking light," although she found it necessary to "mix their learned labours with the devout effusions of more spiritual writers, Baxter, Doddridge, Hall, Hopkins, Jeremy Taylor, ... and the profound Barrow in turn."³⁹ Miss More never experienced 'conversion' in the Wesleyan sense, but by 1785, it is apparent that she had already embraced that form of 'vital' and 'experimental' religion of the heart which was the distinctive mark of the Evangelical.

From 1785 on, her links with the leading Evangelicals were forged

³⁷Hannah More to Mrs. Boscawen, 1780, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 159.

³⁸Hannah More to her sisters, 1782, Ibid., p. 190.

³⁹Hannah More to her sisters, 1785, Ibid., p. 317.

and strengthened. She had been acquainted with the Middletons and their friend, Mrs. Bouverie, for some time, but in the 'eighties, her ardent support of their anti-slave trade agitation brought them closer together. By correspondence, she developed a life-long friendship with John Newton, whose sermons and writings she had praised so highly.⁴⁰ It was Newton who introduced her to the works of Cowper, and though there is no record of her having met the famous poet, they certainly thought highly of one another.⁴¹

Her most important contact with the 'Evangelical party' was made in 1787, when she met William Wilberforce at Bath. They were both favorites of London society, both excellent conversationalists and able writers, and had both been profoundly influenced by Newton.⁴² Though she was fourteen years his senior, they immediately became close friends. Indeed, Wilberforce was soon the most important single influence on the course of her life.

It was to Wilberforce that she "owed her introduction in the 'nineties to the remarkable group of 'consistent Christians' called, incorrectly but not inappropriately, the 'Clapham Sect'."⁴³ She became friends with the Thorntons, Zachary Macaulay and Lord Teignmouth, and though she never lived at Clapham permanently, she spent much of her time

⁴⁰For the early correspondence between Hannah More and John Newton, see Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 382-394.

⁴¹Jones, op. cit., p. 90.

⁴²For the importance of Newton in the conversion of Wilberforce, see Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, Life of William Wilberforce, J. Murray, London, 1839, Vol. I. pp. 96-103.

⁴³Jones, op. cit., p. 92.

in London visiting these most Evangelical of homes.

Her friendship with the Thorntons was of particular importance, for it was during her frequent visits to their home that she met many of the rank and file of the Evangelical party and its sympathisers.⁴⁴ Moreover, her experiences in this most pious of households⁴⁵ were to form the basis of many of the recommendations she made in her didactic writings for the 'great'. Though she appears to have had little or no contact with the Cambridge Evangelicals, it is hardly possible that she could have failed to meet Simeon at the Thorntons.

In Hannah More, the Evangelical party had acquired a powerful ally. She was a national figure at the height of her fame. She was known and respected by royalty, many of the nobility, and hundreds of people of rank and influence. From her frequent contacts with polite society in London and Bath, she had gained a first-hand knowledge of its shortcomings and, equally important, a good idea of the kind of terms in which criticisms of these shortcomings had to be couched if they were to be read and noted by those who counted. As Bishop Porteus pointed out to her in 1787, "Where...can we find anyone but yourself that can make the 'fashionable world' read books of morality and religion, and find improvement when they are only looking for amusement?"⁴⁶ She had a great capacity

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁵For a sensitive account of the Thornton's home life, see E. M. Forster, Marianne Thornton, A Domestic Biography. Harcourt Brace and Co., New York, 1956. pp. 21-64.

⁴⁶Bishop Porteus to Hannah More, 1787, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 382.

for work and was a born politician, instinctively knowing what approach to adopt with an individual in order to win his friendship and support. Finally, she was rapidly acquiring a sense of her 'calling' in life, and, as her spiritual life deepened, difficulties and opposition became not something to dread, but rather trials sent by God to test her faith. Though she might well become discouraged, she would never allow herself to give up what was, for her, a divine mission.

From 1787 on, Miss More may be considered a leading figure in the Evangelical party, closely connected with the Clapham Sect by ties of friendship and common beliefs and interests. Her religious viewpoint was now finally worked out. It was primarily this viewpoint that formed the basis of her political and social views and her humanitarian and educational endeavours.

For Hannah More, doctrinal problems were never easy to understand and rarely interested her. The interminable arguments about Calvinism, Arminianism and Socinianism were, in her view, futile and unimportant. In common with other Evangelicals, she was no theologian, and not necessarily concerned with logical consistency. It has been suggested that she was clearly marked off from the rest of the Evangelicals because of her refusal to countenance any peculiarly Calvinistic doctrine.⁴⁷ In fact, as Jones has pointed out, there was no consistent Evangelical theology. Certain beliefs all Evangelicals held in common but each retained his or her own peculiar theological viewpoint independently of

⁴⁷J. H. Overton and F. Relton, The English Church: 1714 - 1800, McMillan and Co., London, 1924. p. 244.

the others.⁴⁸

What she did emphasise, and this too she did in common with other Evangelicals, was the total depravity of man and his need for salvation. The Fall, Atonement, Redemption and Salvation were key words for all Evangelicals, and it was this overt agreement about what should be emphasised and the understanding that doctrinal disputes must be avoided which kept them together as such a tight-knit body. Hannah More's view of 'true Christianity' is repeated over and over again in her correspondence after 1787. "I take my stand," she wrote to a friend, "upon these two texts: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God', and, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'"⁴⁹ Salvation is the gift of God; it cannot be merited or earned. Yet faith was not enough, and the emphasis she placed on holiness meant that she must live as if salvation depended solely on her own exertions. Thus, life was one long, slow process of sanctification. In typically Evangelical fashion, Miss More recorded this process in her journal. At the beginning of 1798, she wrote,

Jan. 1 1798. - Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day. Lord, I am spared, while others are cut off. Let me dedicate myself to thee with a more entire surrender than I have ever yet made. ...

Sunday, Jan. 7. - I will confess my sins - Repent of them. - Plead the atonement. - Resolve to love God and Christ. - Implore the aid of the Spirit for light, strength, and direction. - Examine if these things are done. - Be humbled for my failures. - Watch and pray.

Sunday, Jan. 21. ...Am I tempted to vanity? let me call to mind

⁴⁸Jones, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

⁴⁹Hannah More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber, 1820, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 303.

what shining friends I have lost this year -- each eminent in his different way, yet he that is least in the kingdom of grace is greater than they.⁵⁰

If this constant process of self-abasement, supplication and pious meditation is kept in mind, the Evangelical preoccupation of Miss More with death, death-beds and funerals is not quite as morbid as it first appears. Death was not just the end of life; it was the beginning of everlasting bliss or damnation. The act of dying thus acquired an enormous significance. Not only was it important to discover, by noting the demeanour and conversation of the dying, if they were, in fact, saved; the deathbed scene was a profound religious experience for those who attended. Indeed it was an essential part of a truly religious education. After 1779, Hannah More's letters were often filled with long and detailed accounts of death-beds and funerals, and she admitted, in a letter to Mr. Pepys in 1786, "I know nothing so interesting as the closing scenes of a champion of righteousness."⁵¹ In 1792, writing to Mrs. Kennicott, she mentioned that two of Mr. Wilberforce's cousins were dying heroically and piously, and that she had been several times to visit them. She was pleased to report, "It is a profitable attendance. Two such dying beds, so near each other, are not easy to be found."⁵² Such a view of the importance of death would obviously exercise a considerable influence on her educational ideas.

Intensely personal as this Evangelical Christianity was, Hannah

⁵⁰Cited in Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. pp. 21-23.

⁵¹Hannah More to W. Pepys, 1786, Ibid., Vol. I. p. 357.

⁵²Hannah More to Mrs. Kennicott, 1792, Ibid., p. 507.

More maintained a high respect and love of the Established Church. It is true that, in her early life, she had many friends among Dissenters. It is also true that she tended to play down the importance of certain aspects of the sacraments and ordinances of the Church.⁵³ Yet in the early 1800s, her attachment to the Established Church 'put her at loggerheads' with many Methodists and Dissenters.⁵⁴ Thompson's view that she was "a pure and simple child of the Church"⁵⁵ is essentially correct.

But this attachment to the Church as an institution did not mean that she was satisfied with the work of its ministers or its general ethos. The Church and society were both in need of a change of heart. There had always been a strong strain of what may be termed 'secular puritanism' present in her beliefs, and, as these beliefs became distinctively Evangelical, this 'puritan' aspect of her thought came to occupy a more dominant position.

Along with other Evangelicals, she was decidedly ascetic. As she grew older, her chief regret was that her early life had been too full of worldly pleasures. This world was a testing ground and its pleasures merely dangers and pitfalls for the 'true' and 'vital' Christian. All learning and works of art that tended to distract men's minds from the 'one thing needful' were to be shunned. In her journal, she thanked God that reading Hume, Voltaire and Rousseau in her youth had not "shipwrecked her faith."⁵⁶ Madame de Stael's belief that religion was necessarily

⁵³Jones, op. cit., pp. 230-233. ⁵⁴Thompson, op. cit., p. 355.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 330.

⁵⁶Cited in Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 23.

connected with the fine arts, poetry and eloquent expression found no echo in the heart of Hannah More. As she pointed out time and again, "Religion has found some of her worst enemies in those who have been most supremely gifted."⁵⁷ Thus, Byron's "highly seasoned corruption" and his "compeers in sin and infamy" are to be avoided. Even the novels of that "unparalleled genius, Walter Scott," while they are beautiful and worth reading, are distinguished more by the "absence of much evil than by the presence of much good."⁵⁸

If undue concentration on secular learning and the intellect was dangerous, the current extravagance of taste in fashion and amusements was even more so. Cards and gambling had never appealed to a lover of conversation, but from her new Evangelical viewpoint, they were distinctly irreligious. Dancing, extravagant hairstyles, make-up, jewellery and perfume were further evidence of an 'un-serious' attitude to life, quite incompatible with a 'vital' Christianity.

On no issue was she more convinced and forthright than a proper observance of the Sabbath. She refused, often very firmly, all invitations to attend Sunday concerts and discouraged her friends from doing so.⁵⁹ She never patronised shopkeepers who did business on Sundays, and thoroughly approved of Wilberforce's action in preventing soldiers being drilled on the Sabbath.⁶⁰ The horror she felt at Pitt's duel in 1798 was only matched

⁵⁷ Hannah More to Sir W. Pepys, Dec. 23, 1820. Ibid., p. 309.

⁵⁸ Hannah More to the Reverend David Wilson, 1822, Ibid., pp. 341-342.

⁵⁹ Hannah More to her sisters, 1788, Ibid., Vol. I. p. 406.

⁶⁰ Wilberforce to Hannah More, Jan. 15, 1806, Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, Correspondence of William Wilberforce, J. Murray, London, 1839, Vol. II. pp. 58-60.

by its being fought on a Sunday.⁶¹ In 1815, her joy knew no bounds when she heard that Her Majesty had read Manners of the Great and had resolved never to send for hairdressers on a Sunday, thus not compelling "a poor tradesman to violate the Sabbath."⁶²

Her hatred of French customs and manners, which were much in vogue in London society, was not only based on a certain amount of prejudice, but on her conviction that they were both causes and symptoms of moral and spiritual decay. Her letters abound in anti-Gallican anecdotes and in expressions of dismay at the prevalence of French customs and the love of the English for foreign travel.

However, to unduly emphasise these 'puritan' views gives a misleading impression of her character. For all Evangelicals, and particularly for Hannah More, piety and holiness did not preclude happiness and enjoyment of this world. In her letters to Horace Walpole, she is the same gay, amusing lady of letters she was in the 1770s, able to talk knowledgeably on any literary subject. In spite of the great amount of time she spent writing her religious and didactic works, she still found time to produce a script for a puppet show performed at the Thorntons.⁶³ The very fact that she could win and retain the love of children⁶⁴ suggests that she was not the rigid and rather forbidding puritan her Evangelical biographer, Roberts, would have us think she was.

⁶¹Hannah More to her sister, 1798, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. pp. 14-15.

⁶²Hannah More to Mr. Harford, 1825, Ibid., p. 389.

⁶³Forster, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶⁴Marianne Thornton, for example, was extremely fond of Hannah More and revered her memory. See Forster, op. cit., pp. 38-41: Infra. Appendix H. pp. 252-253.

Although she always maintained that women should not interfere in political matters, she herself held very decided political opinions and was not frightened of expressing them to her friends and enemies. Yet she never became a party woman, and tended to judge politicians as people rather than as supporters of a particular policy. Thus, she was able to converse amiably with such diverse political figures as Lord North, Burke and Wilkes.

The basis of these political opinions was her great reverence and love of the monarchy. Not even the moral and emotional excesses of the Prince Regent could destroy her love of kingship. Whatever the king did or said in politics gained her whole-hearted support. In 1774, she had helped Burke and his co-candidate, Mr. Cruger, to win the Bristol election. In the 1780 election, however, when Mr. Cruger "impugned the policy of the American War,...openly advocated the rebellion and his mob marched under the thirteen stripes," she and her sisters did all they could to defeat him.⁶⁵ She even parted company with Burke on this issue, their estrangement lasting until their similar ideas about the French revolution brought them together again.

Her disapproval of the American revolution was nothing compared to the horror she felt at the course of the revolution in France. Indeed, her political and social beliefs are nowhere better illustrated than in her reactions to the French Revolution. Burke's "cardinal principle of a divine purpose immanent in the existing order of things was her cardinal principle."⁶⁶ The excesses of the revolution proved conclusively that the

⁶⁵Thompson, op. cit., p. 25

⁶⁶Jones, op. cit., p. 134.

French were out to alter things for the sake of alteration, with no regard for God, religion, the rights of kings or the people. As early as 1789, she realised the course that events were taking, and remarked in a letter to Horace Walpole,

These people seem to be tending to the only two deeper evils than those in which they are at present involved; for I can figure no greater mischief than despotism and popery, except anarchy and atheism. I could find in my heart to forgive Louis Quatorze all the spite I owe him, if he could know that the throne of the grand monarque has been overturned by fishwomen.⁶⁷

But in one important respect, her views were in marked contrast to those of Burke.

Good order, she agreed with him, was the foundation of all good things; to achieve it the people must be tractable and obedient, but her humanity made it impossible for her to despise them or to refer to them in his unhappy phrase as the 'swinish multitude'. Her respect and affection for the poor was in marked contrast to his contempt. The people were ignorant and childish, easily excited by wicked men for their own ends; they must be taught, she held, where truth lay in the great debate of the day.⁶⁸

It was with this idea in mind that she wrote her Village Politics and Cheap Repository Tracts.

When Dupont suggested in the French National Assembly that a system of education based on a total absence of religion be instituted in France, and had the temerity to publish his speech and allow it to circulate in England, she felt obliged to answer his arguments in Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont. The proceeds of the sale of the pamphlet, which amounted to some £1,000, were given to French émigré priests, who, though Catholics, were infinitely better than no priests at all.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Hannah More to Horace Walpole, 1789, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 441.

⁶⁸Jones, op. cit., p. 135

⁶⁹Thompson, op. cit., p. 144.

Over Catholic emancipation, her love of the Established Church and the king were both involved. "She had the utmost horror of admitting the subjects of Rome," as Thompson puts it, "to legislate for the free Church of this land."⁷⁰ Her interest in the Oxford election of 1829⁷¹ was intense. Writing to a friend in 1829, she reported,

I tell my friends they must be all alive. The interest of our Church and our country is at stake. ...I did not expect to see the king surrounded by a half-Protestant ministry; had it been Turkish or Jewish, I might have put up with it.⁷²

Her joy at Peel's resounding defeat knew no bounds. "Joy, joy, joy to you, to me! Joy to the individual victorious Protestant! Joy to the great Protestant cause!"⁷³ she wrote to a friend when the result was known.

It is hardly surprising that Hannah More retained to the end of her life an unquestioning acceptance of the eighteenth century social structure in which she had grown up and become a celebrity. She believed implicitly in the ideas of rank and subordination. It never failed to please her, even at the end of her long life, to think that she was sought after by people of rank, although she realised that this pleasure was 'Satan's grand instrument', pride. However much she tried, she could never rid herself of a certain servility in her dealings with the upper orders. By the same

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 368.

⁷¹Wellington and Peel, having convinced the King that Catholic Emancipation was necessary, prepared the bill. Peel, to quiet his conscience, resigned his seat for Oxford University and fought a bye-election on the issue. "The infuriated University Tories gave vent to their rage by throwing him out, and he had hastily to find a pocket borough."

Anthony Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, Longmans, London, 1962. p. 76.

⁷²Hannah More to a friend, 1829, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p.444.

⁷³Ibid., p. 445.

token, her attitude to the poor was condescending in the extreme. Yet the very condescension that modern critics find so irritating⁷⁴ was, in her day, the accepted method of dealing with the lower orders. It was the duty of the rich to be condescending to the poor and this condescension involved much more than just a few kind words of sympathy. Offers of food, money and, where possible, employment were the proper form that condescension should take. Her own charity was extensive and she often gave over £900 a year to the poor, an enormous sum when one considers her income.

A constant theme in her addresses to the poor and discontented is that the benevolence of the rich is much to be preferred to the doubtful advantages to be gained from rioting and petitioning.⁷⁵ A society of rank and subordination, in which responsibilities were stressed more and privileges less, was what she advocated, even at a time when notions of rank were disintegrating under the pressures of urbanisation, industrialisation and the, by now, obvious clash of class interests.

It was her frequent and forceful promulgation of these political and social views that made her the target of so much criticism. It was inevitable that her writings and educational work among the poor should be viewed politically and socially. She had shown herself to be firmly on the side of the status quo; those who wished to destroy or alter it found her an enemy to be discredited and destroyed as an effective influence in society.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Curtis, for example, writes, "Her good intentions were frequently marred by ... the spirit of condescending patronage that often accompanied her efforts." S. J. Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, London, 1957. pp. 200-201.

⁷⁵Infra. Chapter VI. pp. 148-149. ⁷⁶Infra. Chapter V. pp. 123-124.

It was these beliefs and prejudices which inspired all her writings and work after 1787. In 1788, her first major didactic and educational work, Thoughts on the Manners of the Great, was published. It was followed two years later by An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. Both books tended to point out the symptoms of what she considered to be the moral decay of society and to ignore the roots of the disease. But, as Thompson pointed out, "The weeds must be extracted before the seed is sown."⁷⁷ Three strictly educational works followed. In 1799, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education appeared. In 1805, at the request of Dr. R. Gray, Prebendary of Durham, she literally dashed off a guide for the education of the heir presumptive, Princess Charlotte, "whose disastrous upbringing was becoming a matter of profound concern to the nation."⁷⁸ Hints toward Forming the Character of a Princess appeared in the same year and was well received by the public and royal family. In 1808, appalled by the contemporary trends in literature and the absence of elevating books, she wrote her only novel, Coelebs in Search of a Wife, which is, in fact, much less a novel than a series of essays on the correct way to bring up young ladies. Her later writings were of a more religious nature. Practical Piety was published in 1811, Christian Morals in 1812, An Essay on the Character of St. Paul in 1815 and Moral Sketches in 1818. All these books were highly praised and widely read, both in England and overseas.

Her 'usefulness' in the Evangelical party was not confined to writing improving books for the great. She was involved in all the religious and humanitarian endeavours of the Evangelicals. In 1788, her

⁷⁷Thompson, op. cit., p. 82

⁷⁸Jones, op. cit., p. 186

poem, The Slave Trade was recited all over London and was commended by bishops and clergy. In several of her Cheap Repository Tracts she kept alive the cause of the abolitionists at a time when interest was at a low ebb during the Napoleonic wars.⁷⁹ She rejoiced in the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society and remained one of its most active supporters, even after the bitter controversy with the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had deprived it of the support of many of her friends.⁸⁰ She belonged to both societies and saw nothing inconsistent in doing so. It was enough for her that both were engaged in distributing Bibles to those who needed them. The Church Missionary Society, founded in 1801, also received her support, and, on the occasions when the anniversary meetings were held in Bristol, "it became a matter of course for clerics and laymen to pay their respects to the 'old bishop' at Barley Wood."⁸¹

More important and infinitely more time-consuming was the action she took on the suggestion of Wilberforce that she do something to alleviate the lot of the poor in her locality.⁸² She had had several

⁷⁹The tracts that dealt specifically with the slave trade were,
 i. Babay, the true story of a good Negro woman, 1795.
 ii. The Sorrows of Yamba, or the Negro woman's lamentations, 1795.
 iii. True stories of Two Good Negroes.
 iv. The Black Prince, 1798.

⁸⁰The issue that precipitated the conflict was whether or not denominational teaching should accompany the distribution of Bibles. For many of the Established Church the idea of giving away Bibles without religious instruction was anathema. The British and Foreign Bible Society contained a great many Dissenters who naturally refused to countenance denominational teaching. Many of Hannah More's friends left the B. F. B. S. and gave all their support to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which was controlled by the Church of England.

⁸¹Jones, op. cit., p. 210

⁸²Infra.Chapter IV.

contacts with individuals engaged in providing education for the poor, and jumped at the opportunity of doing something 'useful' among the lower orders of her district. She had long been an admirer of Mrs. Trimmer, of whose Economy of Charity and Family Magazine she highly approved. In 1786, she had visited the Old Brentford Sunday Schools,⁸³ and thereafter she maintained close contact with this devout lady and her large family.⁸⁴ She was well acquainted with the writings of the Port Royalists, whose ideas and methods of education she considered sound and Evangelical.⁸⁵ She had met and chatted with Robert Raikes and spoke highly of his work.⁸⁶ The ideas she incorporated into her Cheddar operation were gained from these sources and from her contacts with other members of the Sunday School movement. Within a few years, she had established schools over an area comprising ten parishes. Though she was ably assisted by her sister, Martha, the work involved was arduous and often disheartening. It was this aspect of her work as an Evangelical which aroused the most bitter opposition, culminating in the Blagdon Controversy of 1801/2.⁸⁷

As the opposition to her work and writings grew more powerful and vociferous, the great number of ailments that had plagued her all her life

⁸³The Old Brentford Sunday schools were established by Mrs. Trimmer just outside London. They were visited by many influential people and gave the Sunday school movement considerable publicity.

⁸⁴Hannah More to her sister, May 22, 1788, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 408.

⁸⁵Hannah More to her sister, 1783, Ibid., p. 223.

⁸⁶Hannah More to her sister, April, 1789. Ibid., p. 429.

⁸⁷Infra. Chapter V.

increased in severity. Although Hopkins' view that "Hannah...acquired invalidism as a defence against the normal harshness of the world"⁸⁸ may well be true of the first half of her life, there is no doubt that after 1800 she was a very sick woman. By 1819, all her sisters had died, and Hannah spent the last fourteen years of her life expecting to join them at any moment. She was almost constantly ill and enacted a whole series of extremely edifying death-bed scenes for her friends and visitors.⁸⁹

But this 'twilight of life' was not entirely a useless one. She had been bred up to habits of industry and not even serious illness could keep her inactive. She retained full control over the operation of her schools long after she was unable to inspect them. She maintained an enormous correspondence with friends and admirers all over the world, and literally hundreds of eminent and influential people flocked to Barley Wood each summer to visit the by now almost legendary figure. Even past eighty, she could still charm, flatter and win new friends.

In 1827, due to old age, sickness and a household of dishonest servants, she was forced to leave her beloved Barley Wood to stay with friends at Clifton, near Bristol. There she died in 1833, just a few months before the death of her great inspirer and co-worker, Wilberforce. Her fortune of £30,000 was distributed among some seventy charitable organisations and over one hundred friends, her final act of benevolence.

The life of Hannah More falls into two quite distinct halves. The first half, in which her literary interests predominated, was certainly

⁸⁸Hopkins, op. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁹See, for example, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 282-290.

not lacking in 'usefulness'. It was the fame, the contacts and first-hand experience of the manners of the great which she acquired that enabled her to play such an important part in the Evangelical movement. The second half of her life was wholly spent in what she would have called 'useful' works, writing didactic, educational and religious books for the great, producing tracts and pamphlets for the poor, engaging in the active support of all Evangelical and humanitarian undertakings, and carrying out her own Mendip operation. It is these 'useful' works which make her so important a figure in the sum total of all those influences which helped to create the England of Victoria. It was entirely appropriate that Thompson's biography of Hannah More, published only five years after her death, should be dedicated to the new queen with her full approval. Victoria was to rule over and become a symbol of an England, the whole ethos of which had undergone radical change, and which Hannah More, in no small measure, had helped to create.

CHAPTER IV

THE MENDIP OPERATION

In 1785, Hannah More retired to what she intended to be her retreat from town life, Cowslip Green.¹ For the next four years, she and her sister, Martha, spent their summers in this secluded spot, tending their prized flowers and shrubs. They had, it is true, been instrumental in establishing two local Sunday Schools, but their responsibilities were few and the summers slipped by pleasantly and uneventfully. In August, 1789, however, this idyllic existence was shattered when Wilberforce and his sister came to visit them for a few days.

During the visit, Wilberforce spent a day exploring the famous cliffs and caves of Cheddar. What impressed him most forcefully was not the beauty of the scenery, but the poverty, distress and brutality of the local inhabitants. His diary reads as follows:

Thursday, Aug. 20th. At Cowslip Green all day.
21st. After breakfast to see Cheddar [sic]. Intended to read, dine, etc. amongst the rocks, but could not get rid of the people, so determined to go back again. The rocks very fine. Had some talk with the people, and gave them something - grateful beyond measure - wretchedly poor and deficient in spiritual help. - I hope to amend their state.²

On his return to Cowslip Green, Miss Martha More recorded that he was visibly depressed, refusing all offers of food or company. During the course of the evening, he suddenly remarked, "Miss Hannah More, some-

¹For a map showing the location of Cowslip Green and neighboring villages, see Appendix K, p. 260.

²Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, John Murray, London, 1839, Vol. I. pp. 238-239.

thing must be done for Cheddar."³ Various possibilities were discussed and the conference ended with Wilberforce's promise, "If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense."⁴ When Wilberforce and his sister had returned to London, the two sisters decided that the most effective method of 'doing something' for the local inhabitants was to establish schools in the local villages.

As the sisters were to discover for themselves when they toured the area, not only Cheddar but all the surrounding villages were in need of some Christianising and humanising influence. The Somersetshire countryside was admittedly picturesque, the Mendip Hill containing several famous beauty spots, and the low-lying areas being either unspoilt country or fertile farmland. Yet, for much of the year, these low-lying areas were under water and the roads that did exist were little more than cart-tracks. Villages were often completely isolated for whole months on end, with most of their inhabitants totally unaware of anything outside their parish.

Agriculture was the chief industry in the area, the local tenant farmers being among the most prosperous in the country, some earning as much as £1,000 a year. The farm laborers, on the other hand, invariably lived at or around subsistence level. On top of the Mendips, the villages of Shipham and Rowberrow depended on the local calamine mines, which sent

³Ibid., p. 240 and Martha More, (ed. William Roberts) The Mendip Annals, The Journal of Martha More, James Nisbett and Co., London, 1859, p. 13.

⁴Wilberforce, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 239.

their ore to Bristol to be used in the brass foundries there. When the mines were in full operation, the wages and standards of living were high. But the industry was chronically unstable, being totally dependent on the demand for the ore, and the villagers suffered untold hardships during business depressions. At Nailsea, there were coalmines and a glass factory, both of which were similarly dependent on the state of business in Bristol. In spite of the considerable variety of employment in the area, there was no mobility of labour from one village to another or from one kind of work to another. Thus, the local inhabitants were entirely at the mercy of the weather and the state of business, both equally unpredictable.

Housing conditions were appalling, both in the agricultural and industrial villages. As late as 1834, Thompson recorded having discovered a woman living in one of the Cheddar caves with only a rough door thrown up at the entrance hole as protection from the elements.⁵ In 1789, such 'cliff-dwellers' were more common-place than rare. In Nailsea, the More sisters visited the 'glass-house' people, and discovered

nineteen houses in a row (little hovels) containing in all near two hundred people. ... The high buildings of the glass-houses ranged before the doors of these cottages - the great furnaces roaring - the swearing, eating, and drinking of these half-dressed black looking beings, gave it a most infernal and horrible appearance."⁶

Even more distressing to the sisters was the crime and immorality which characterised the lives of the poor. It was not merely a matter of

⁵Henry Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838, p. 85.

⁶More, op. cit., p. 28.

a few illegitimate children and occasional cases of robbing orchards and poaching. It was said, for example, that no constable would venture to arrest a Shipham man lest he should be murdered and hidden in one of the mine pits.⁷ At the village of Wedmore, the sisters later opened a school to which came several youths tried at the last assizes, and three children of a man lately condemned to be hanged.⁸ There is little doubt, in fact, that the local poor had been almost totally brutalised by their environment. As Hannah More herself put it, the people "are at present as ignorant as the beasts of the parish, intoxicated every day before dinner, and plunged into such vices as make one think London a virtuous place."⁹

Nor was there any prospect of improvement being attempted by the Church. There were thirteen adjoining parishes without a resident curate.¹⁰ In a letter to Wilberforce, Miss More wrote that, on asking the farmers of Cheddar if they had a resident curate, "they told me they had a right to insist on one; which right, they confessed, they had never ventured to exercise, for fear their tithes should be raised."¹¹ She went on to point out,

The Vicarage of Cheddar is in the gift of the Dean of Wells; the value nearly fifty pounds per annum. The incumbent is a Mr. R -- who has something to do, but I cannot here find out what, in the University of Oxford, where he resides. The curate lives at Wells, twelve miles distant. They have only service once a week, and there

⁷Ibid.

⁸Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1795, William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I. p. 567

⁹Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1789, Ibid., p. 451.

¹⁰Hannah More to Mrs. Kennicott, 1789, Ibid., p. 456.

¹¹Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1789, Ibid., pp. 451-452.

is scarcely an instance of a poor person being visited, or prayed with. The living of Axbridge belongs to the Prebendary of Wiveliscombe, in the cathedral of Wells. The annual value is about fifty pounds. The incumbent, about sixty years of age. The Prebend to which this rectory belongs is in the gift of the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Mr. G. is intoxicated about six times a week, and very frequently is prevented from preaching by two black eyes, honestly earned by fighting.¹²

It is hardly surprising that congregations were small, and that most children had never seen the inside of a church since the day they were christened.¹³

In early September, 1789, however, many of these unpleasant revelations lay ahead, and the sisters were concerned only with the immediate problem of establishing a school in the village of Cheddar. Since the procedure the sisters followed in establishing this, their first school, was typical of that used in setting up their others, this initial operation will be described in some detail.

Early one morning, the two sisters set off for Cheddar riding side-saddle into what was literally 'savage country'. There is something of the farcical and a good deal of the epic about the mental picture of these two middle-aged spinsters, neither of whom had had any experience with the lower orders, jogging along the country roads to establish a school in a village which they had never previously visited, and where they knew no-one.

On the road to Cheddar, the sisters met an old rabbit-catcher, who, on hearing their plans, informed them that "nothing could be undertaken in

¹²Ibid.

¹³Hannah More to Rev. John Newton, 1796, Ibid., p. 573.

Cheddar without the concurrence of Mr. C., a rich farmer who lived ten miles below."¹⁴ They very wisely decided to win the support of this 'local tyrant' before visiting Cheddar itself, and made their way to his farmhouse. At first, Mr. C. was horrified. He assured them that "religion would be the ruin of agriculture; that it was a dangerous thing, and had produced much mischief ever since it was introduced by the monks down at Glastonbury."¹⁵ The sisters, however, were excellent politicians and, by praising his wine, by assuring him that the school would require no subscriptions and would certainly reduce the robbing of his orchards, they eventually won his support.

The next morning, they made their way to Cheddar and spent most of the day visiting other leading members of the community, informing them of their plans and overcoming their objections. Before the end of the day, they had rented a house to be used as the school-building and were on their way to Bristol to try and locate a suitable teacher.

Within a week or two, they discovered a Mrs. Baber and her daughter, who were to be the most successful of their teachers. In early October, Mrs. Baber, her daughter and a spinning mistress, "with the true spirit of missionaries" and all their belongings in the cart behind them, arrived at Cheddar in the pouring rain. The next day, all the parents of the parish were assembled and informed of the school's opening. Martha More described the final stages of the operation as follows:

By the following Sunday, we had prepared everything in order, and on the 25th of October 1789, we opened our school with 140

¹⁴More, op. cit., p. 14

¹⁵Ibid.

children,¹⁶ with exhortation, portions of Scripture, and prayer. The clergyman, being advertised of our intention, was so very judicious as to give us a twelve minute discourse upon good Tory principles, upon the laws of the land and the Divine right of Kings; but the Divine Right of the King of Kings seemed to be a law above his comprehension.

The day following we opened the School of Industry; and, after witnessing more ignorance than we supposed existed anywhere in England, we took leave of Cheddar, leaving poor Mrs. Baber to encounter these savages, in a place where she was a total stranger.¹⁷

There were, therefore, two schools established, a School of Industry, which operated as a day school, and a Sunday School, both using the same building. Five weeks after the opening of the schools, Martha visited Cheddar to inspect them.

The change I found was considerable. Upward of thirty said the Catechism perfectly, forty could sing three psalms, and several of the great girls were beginning to know the Scriptures; the face of the village much changed; not a child to be found on the cliffs on a Sunday; the church gradually filling.¹⁸

Unfortunately, the School of Industry was not flourishing. It had been hoped that teaching the children to spin yarn for the stocking-makers of Uxbridge would not only pay for itself but give the children some small earnings. But the children wasted large amounts of material, and the yarn that they did produce was so coarse that it was difficult to find a market for it. Eventually, the day school concentrated almost entirely on training the children for domestic service.

¹⁶If this number seems inordinately large, it should be remembered that all over the country children flocked into Sunday schools. Some reasons for their popularity are suggested in Chapter II. Supra. pp. 24-26.

¹⁷More, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 24.

In March, 1790, Hannah More wrote to her sister from London, suggesting an extension of their activities in Cheddar.

As to improving upon the Cheddar scheme, I have thought it over soberly and coolly. Surely no harm can arise from giving leave to such parents as desire to hear their children instructed, to come in the evening, and be instructed themselves. We will first limit the number; as to the time, an hour will be quite sufficient; more would break in upon the children's time, and take the parents too long from their own families. They are so ignorant that they need to be taught the very elements of Christianity.¹⁹

Although only four adults turned out for the first of these Sunday evening classes, the number quickly increased to sixty.

This was the pattern of events which was to be repeated in the other villages. The sisters would first visit the parish and attempt to win the support of the vicar or curate and other locally influential inhabitants. They would then rent or build a suitable school-house, hire teachers, and open their day and/or Sunday school, extending religious instruction to the adults of the parish.

In September, 1790, a Sunday and day school was opened in the united parishes of Shipham and Rowberrow. Rather than deterring the sisters, the bad reputation that the calamine miners had earned only served to indicate to them the pressing need for education and religious instruction. They located a building that could be used as a school, and were equally fortunate in discovering two young and pious girls who could read and write. After being instructed in the More sisters' method of teaching, they were hired as the teachers for the new school.²⁰

¹⁹Hannah More to Martha More, 1790, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 461-462.

²⁰More, op. cit., p. 29.

Unfortunately, there is no information relating to just what was the More sisters' 'method of teaching'. It seems likely, however, that they made every effort to instruct their teachers in Evangelical principles, and to suggest suitable reading matter to them. Hannah More mentioned that she presented all her teachers with Burkitt's Exposition to direct their principles.²¹ Miss More nowhere discusses directly corporal punishment but again it seems likely that she informed her teachers they were not to use it as a means of discipline.²²

The third day and Sunday school was established two years later at Nailsea, with the wholehearted support of the village elders and colliers. Even the 'glasshouse' workers consented to send their children. Unable to find a suitable teacher locally, the sisters were forced to 'import' a Mr. Younge and his wife from Bath. Although he was, perhaps, the best educated of their teachers, he possessed the unfortunate knack of making enemies. Before long, the villagers requested the removal of the couple, refusing to give any reasons. After a good deal of unpleasantness, the More sisters gave way and allowed the local inhabitants to choose their own teacher, a young collier who had been converted to a vital religion and incapacitated as a result of a bad accident in the mine. The sisters could not understand what could possibly cause the villagers to prefer an ignorant collier lad to a highly qualified teacher, but they graciously took the young boy in hand and secured him a brief but

²¹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

²²See, for example, her view of discipline. Infra., Chapter VII, p. 191.

'superior' education to qualify him for his duties.²³ In fact, Nailsea became one of the best schools in the Mendip Operation and was a continual source of satisfaction to its patronesses.

Meanwhile, several 'lesser schools', so called because they were intended to operate only on Sundays, were established by the sisters in other parishes. By the summer of 1792, Sanford, Banwell, Yatton, Congresbury, Draycott and Axbridge had been provided with Sunday schools. Later, Wedmore and Blagdon were to be similarly served. By 1796, there were schools in ten parishes containing over one thousand children.

The Mendip Operation was not confined merely to the provision of day and Sunday schools. In the summer of 1792, the devout Mrs. Baber informed the sisters that there existed a general demand for further instruction, besides that provided on Sunday evenings. She suggested that one evening in the week be set aside for the older boys and girls to attend the school, where she would read and explain a passage of scripture.²⁴ The experiment proved to be a great success, at least as far as attendance was concerned, and the offer was extended to the parents. Within a short time, this further instruction was offered in every school for which the sisters had been lucky enough to find a suitable Evangelical teacher. Even the 'lesser schools' began to open on weekday evenings for older children and adults. By 1794, Hannah More could proudly announce to

²³By 'superior education,' Martha meant that the young collier was taught to read, write and 'cypher,' in addition to being thoroughly instructed in the Scriptures.

More, op. cit., p. 178.

²⁴Ibid., p. 54.

Wilberforce,

We have the school open every evening to persons of different descriptions, and, what I think would please you, several young day-labourers, when they come home late at night from harvest, so tired that they can hardly stand, will not go to rest their weary limbs, till they have been up to school for a chapter and a prayer.²⁵

The sisters quickly realised that 'the better sort' would never attend these evening meetings if they were forced to mix with their inferiors. As Hannah More explained, in a letter to Newton,

Finding the heads of the parish, (farmers) quite as ignorant as their labourers, we devised a method, at the outset, of saving their pride, by setting apart one evening in the week on purpose for their instruction. Above twenty of them, including their wives, attend, and many seem to be brought under serious impressions.²⁶

By the summer of 1792, the sisters had extended their sphere of influence to the local poor-houses, where they provided religious instruction and family prayer for the inmates, with suitable rewards for those who attended. Miss Martha More related a significant anecdote regarding this aspect of their work.

The family prayer in the poor house goes on well. All have attended cheerfully twice a day, except one woman, who came with the rest for her promised reward at Christmas, of a shilling, a piece of beef, and some pease; but our friend, on inquiry, found she had never attended one. On being asked the reason, she replied, "I did not come to prayers because I thought 't'was Wesleying." So, as she refused the benefits of prayer, she was denied the pleasure of beef.²⁷

Not only does this episode illustrate the kind of rewards (and punishments) used by the sisters to increase attendance, but it shows that they were

²⁵Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1794, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 540.

²⁶Hannah More to Rev. John Newton, Sept. 15, 1796, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 573.

²⁷More, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

already on dangerous ground. The unfortunate woman who failed to get the Christmas treat was not alone in believing that the sisters were 'Wesleying'. Explanations of the Bible by laymen, evening sermons by laymen, family prayers conducted by laymen, they were all highly suspicious proceedings and, in the eyes of many of the local inhabitants, savouring of Methodism.

Meanwhile, however, things went well, and one further innovation was made. As was suggested above, the villages of Shipham and Rowberrow were often in desperate economic circumstances, being totally at the mercy of seasonal and yearly fluctuations in the demand for their ore. In the winter of 1792, Miss More described the situation in Shipham as follows:

Our village of Shipham has suffered dreadfully from a raging fever - we lost seven in two days, several of them our poor children. Figure to yourself such a visitation in a place where a single cup of broth cannot be obtained; for there is none to give, if it would save a life. I am ashamed of my comforts when I think of their wants; one widow, to whom we allow a little pension, burnt her only table for firing; another one of her three chairs. I had the comfort, however, of knowing that poor Jones distributed what we sent most conscientiously, and ran the risk of walking into the pits with which the place abounds, and which were so covered by snow that he was near being lost. 'No words,' he wrote me, 'could describe the sensations of this poor village at seeing a waggon-load of coal we sent, enter the place!' I feel indignant to think that so small a sum can create such feelings, when one knows what sums one has wasted. Most providentially we had a most respectable mistress at the school, who entered so tenderly into their wants, that they would send to fetch her at midnight, and she supplied all the sick with broth, medicine, etc..²⁸

The hardships that the villagers endured during this winter of 1791-92 determined the sisters to organise a women's Friendly Society for the relief of poor and sick members. The suggestion was "received with much pleasure by the women, and with many smiles of the men."²⁹

²⁸Hannah More to a friend, 1792, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 498-499.

²⁹More, op. cit., p. 64.

After a great deal of discussion, a set of rules of operation were drawn up. Though the sisters were able to dominate the meeting, they did not get things all their own way, and were forced to concede ground on several issues. For example, the local women insisted that their families should receive more money for their funerals than they themselves would be given at their 'lyings-in'. Martha More, in much disgust, recorded,

Those wretches, half-naked, and I believe some of them half-starved, had a long contention, with as much fury as they dared exhibit before us, declaring that they would rather relinquish the comforts and blessings of assistance at their lyings-in, to enrich the stock and procure a handsome funeral; and I myself heard a Rowberrow woman declare - "What did a poor woman work hard for, but in hopes she should be put out of the world in a tidy way?"³⁰

The main articles of agreement were as follows.³¹ Each member was to pay one shilling as an entry fee, and thereafter three halfpennies a week. In return for these subscriptions, each member who was sick was to receive three shillings and sixpence a week for the first four weeks, and one shilling and sixpence a week thereafter until she recovered. On the death of a member, the family was to receive one guinea and each member to contribute sixpence to the funeral. At a 'lying-in', provided the member had been married nine months, the mother was to receive seven shillings and sixpence. There were to be no benefits payable for at least a year, and membership was confined to those over fourteen, under forty-five,

³⁰Ibid., pp. 65-66.

³¹The following summary of the rules of the society is based on 'Articles of Agreement to be Observed by a Society of Women, held in the parishes of Shipham and Rowberrow, in Somersetshire; commencing in September, 1792', cited in The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, (ed. Thomas Bernard), Of the Education of the Poor, A Digest of the Reports of the Society, W. Bulmer and Co., London, 1809, pp. 115-116.

and in a good state of health. The annual meeting was set for early July, when the patronesses and members would attend service, a sermon and a tea-party. The down-to-earth miners' wives consented to this last point only when the sisters agreed to meet all the expenses of the entertainment. At these annual meetings, all young women who had been married in the past year or who were about to marry, provided they had attended the village school and religious instruction, were to be presented with an award of five shillings, a new Bible and a pair of white stockings, knitted by the patronesses.

It was at these annual meetings of the women's clubs that Martha More delivered her famous 'charges' to the women of the parish.³² They consisted of outspoken comments on the merits and defects of the behaviour of the members during the past year, and of pious exhortations that they be thankful for the benevolence shown them and strive to make their conduct pleasing to God and their patronesses. Their tone is condescending in the extreme and, of course, intensely irritating to a modern reader. That the 'charges' did not affect in the least the love and respect which the poor felt for Martha and Hannah suggests that the sisters were able to achieve a unique relationship with them.

The excitement that attached to these annual meetings was surpassed only by the joy and festivity of the 'feast day' of clubs and schools. At the first of these feast days, in 1791, 517 children and 300 elders were assembled on Callow Hill, a high part of Mendip. Nearly 4,000 people were there to watch the children arrive in procession from their various

³²One of Miss Martha More's charges to the women of Shipham and Rowberrow is given in full in Appendix B, pp. 220-224.

parishes, singing psalms. When they had sat down and devoured "thirteen large pieces of beef, 45 great plum puddings, 600 cakes, several loaves and a great cask of cider," they were questioned on their attainments by local clergymen. The children then dispersed to the villages with much singing of psalms.³³

Within a year or two, these annual 'feast days' had aroused much local interest, with people from all over that part of Somerset coming to see the proceedings. Miss Martha More's description of the 'feast day' of 1798 illustrates well the great success and popularity that the schools enjoyed during these early years of operation.

The day arrived; it was wet - the beef and pudding all prepared. We were obliged to call up all our fortitude, being anxious lest our food should be spoiled, and planned much good advice, for the Sunday following, upon patience.

However, the next morning the rain subsided, the sun shone, and the day was beautiful. We met on a high fine part of Mendip, our nine schools composed of near one thousand children. The clergy of the several parishes attended, and led the procession. A band of rustic music - a tribute of gratitude from all the neighbouring villages - stepped forward and preceded the whole, playing 'God save the King.' We followed the clergy, then Ma'm Baber, and her two hundred Cheddarites, and so on - the procession ending with Nailsea, and the girls having fine nosegays, the boys carrying white rods in their hands; the gentlemen and ladies weeping, as though we had exhibited a deep tragedy; At the entrance of our circle, the music withdrew, and the children then struck up their psalms and hymns. All were then seated in circles, fifteen completing the whole. The effect was really very interesting. When all were served they arose, and each pastor, stepping into the inside, prayed for a blessing on his own flock; and this part of the ceremony they did well - long solemn. Examination, singing, etc. took place. At length, every voice on the hill was permitted, and invited, to join in one general chorus of 'God save the King'. This is the only pleasure in the form of a song, we ever allow. Instantaneously, the children, the masters and mistresses, keeping their eyes on the clergy and ourselves, fell into the procession as at the beginning, walked to the place where we first met; and every school marched off to their several districts, singing hallelujahs till they sunk into the valley, and their voices

³³More, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

could be no more heard. Seven or eight thousand people attended, and behaved as quietly as the sheep that grazed around us.³⁴

Both Hannah and Martha More rapidly developed a deep and lasting sense of responsibility for the physical as well as the moral well-being of the poor of the district. They extended the women's clubs to Cheddar and Nailsea, and by 1825, the three clubs had funds of over £2,000 invested in government stock. They used their influence and money to ensure that the industrial workers would be at least partially protected from the hardships of unemployment and low wages. During the depression of 1817, we find Hannah More writing to Wilberforce,

Did I ever tell you I am in trade, and capable of being made a bankrupt? The poor miners at Shipham, etc. have I believe experienced a distress nowhere else felt. Besides begging a considerable sum for them, I employed my own money in purchasing their ore. Seventy-five pounds were soon gone. I have now given security to government, jointly with six other persons, for £700 more.³⁵

The following year, "by begging, borrowing, and giving," she managed to clear off the arrears of contributions to the women's clubs,³⁶ and, as late as 1825, she was writing to Lady Olivia Sparrow on behalf of the Shipham and Rowberrow miners.

You have heard me speak of the two mining villages, where I had a school nearly fifty years, This gives me a peculiar interest in the wants of these poor people; for though their ground is covered with the ore by which they used to subsist, they cannot sell any, such is the state of trade! If, my dearest lady, you could spare a small charity, I shall most thankfully dispose of it.³⁷

So closely did the sisters identify themselves with the interests of the miners that when the miners of Nailsea came back from a strike in Bristol,

³⁴Ibid., pp. 87-89.

³⁵Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1817, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p.236.

³⁶Hannah More to Miss Roberts, 1818, Ibid., pp. 260-261.

³⁷Hannah More to Lady Olivia Sparrow, 1825, Ibid., pp. 411-412.

the sisters, who detested any insubordination of the lower orders, merely rejoiced at their safe return, and subjected them to no harsh terms of reproach.³⁸

Perhaps even more important than the charity which the sisters dispensed in the villages was the sound advice they constantly gave. As Miss Hannah More put it, "I endeavoured to show them that their distresses arise nearly as much from their own bad management as from the hardness of the times."³⁹ To remedy this 'bad management', Hannah wrote a tract, The Way to Plenty, recommending various cheap dishes and methods of economising. In addition to distributing this useful literature in the parishes, the sisters made valiant and largely successful efforts to dissuade the local poor from drinking gin and tea, both of which were expensive, and to persuade them to brew and drink their own ale. They also organised communal bake-ovens in the village which saved considerable amounts of firewood, turfs and coal.

It is, thus, hardly surprising that the villagers accepted all the lectures, the moralising, the exhortations to be grateful and to lead blameless lives. From people who had not interested themselves in the welfare of the poor, they would have been both unacceptable and unforgivable; from the More sisters they were not only acceptable but welcomed. Perhaps Hannah More herself best sums up her own and her sister's attitude to the local poor. In 1792, in a letter to a friend, she wrote,

³⁸J. L. and B. Hammond, The Town Labourer, 1760-1832. Longmans, Green, & Co., New York, 1920. p. 228.

³⁹Hannah More to Mrs. Boscawen, Nov. 1793, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 535.

I have devoted the remnant of my life [in fact, she lived for another forty-one years] to the poor, and those who have no helper; and if I can do them little good, I can at least sympathise with them, and I know it is some comfort for a forlorn creature to be able to say, 'there is somebody that cares for me.' Besides this, the affection they have for me, is a strong engine with which to lift them to the love of higher things: and though I believe others work successfully by terror, yet kindness is the instrument with which God has enabled me to work. Alas! I might do more and better.⁴⁰

More than anything, the local poor appreciated the sincerity of the concern of both sisters for their physical and spiritual well-being.

One final aspect of Hannah More's activities in the Mendip Operation merits attention. She soon realised that one of the major obstacles to the introduction of a vital Christianity into the Mendip villages lay in the absence or disinterestedness of local vicars and curates. For a person of Hannah More's religious persuasions, this situation was intolerable. Using all her influence with the higher clergy and local gentry, she was several times able to push forward the names of young men of Evangelical views and secure them preferment to the livings of local parishes. Thus, Mr. Jones, an impoverished but truly Evangelical curate, was, through the influence of Miss More with the Dean and Chapter of Wells, presented to the living of Shipham, whose previous holder had been an aged vicar, who had not preached there for forty years.⁴¹

When it proved impossible to 'gain control' of the parish, Miss More attempted, as often as possible, to secure pulpits for visiting Evangelical preachers. In 1791, for example, Newton was invited to Cowslip Green for a visit, and preached in several of the local parishes.⁴²

⁴⁰Hannah More to a friend, 1792, *Ibid.*, p. 503.

⁴¹More, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴²Hannah More to Rev. John Newton, 1791, Roberts, *op. cit.*, Vol I. p. 474.

Though the More sisters approved of his preaching, several of the local gentry were profoundly shocked, and were confirmed in their suspicions that the sisters were, in fact, wildly 'enthusiastic' Methodists. In a letter to William Hayley, Anna Seward recollected her experience of Newton's visit and preaching.

I once heard Mr. Newton preach a violently methodistical, and consequently absurd and dangerous sermon. Miss H. More and her sisters had requested for him the pulpit of the late pious and excellent Mr. Inman, their neighbour; When church was over Mr. Inman expressed deep regret for having, however, reluctantly, granted Miss More's request. Now, said he, has this man, in one hour perhaps, rendered fruitless my labour of many years to keep my parishioners free from those wild, deceiving principles, which have turned the heads of half the poor ignorant people in this country.⁴³

Before long, the whole of the area would be forced to take sides, either on behalf of the More sisters and their Evangelical friends, or among the ranks of those who, like Miss Seward and Mr. Inman, considered the activities of the sisters rank Methodism.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the activities of the sisters went on unchecked.

Despite the widespread nature of their operations, the sisters exercised considerable control over their schools and succeeded in establishing a fairly uniform system of education. Thompson aptly describes Hannah More's theory of education for the lower and middle classes as a "suitable education for each, and a religious education for all."⁴⁵ 'A suitable education for each' meant that the lower orders should be

⁴³Anna Seward to William Hayley, March 7, 1803, Anna Seward, The Letters of Anna Seward, 1784-1807, Archibald Constable and Co., Edinburgh, 1811. Vol. VI. p. 65.

⁴⁴Infra., Chapter V. pp.119-120

⁴⁵Thompson, op. cit., p. 97.

"formed to habits of industry and virtue," and given instruction in "such coarse works as may fit them for servants."⁴⁶ But what kind of an education and how much instruction was needed to 'fit them for servants'? Miss More believed that a middle course should be steered "between the scylla of brutal ignorance and the charybdis of a literary education,"⁴⁷ Thus, the poor should be instructed in reading, in order that they might read for themselves the Bible and other suitable literature. On the other hand, there was no real justification for teaching them to write or 'to cypher'. The circumstances of their everyday existence would make such skills totally superfluous.

For the middle orders, however, a more literary education was required. Miss More pointed out that "the knowledge necessary for persons of this class, was such as would qualify them for constables, overseers, churchwardens, jurymen..."⁴⁸ In the Mendip schools, therefore, the farmers' sons were permitted to attend school on weekdays to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic, on payment of a small fee. This practice of providing two distinct types of education, one for the lower and another for the middle class, persisted well after Hannah More's death. In 1839, Thompson noted,

This practice is now common in the Mendip districts; almost every 'national' school deriving a part of its support from the contributions of farmers, who possess, by somewhat larger subscriptions, the privilege of presenting their own children, and of obtaining for them a superior kind of education.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Hannah More to T. Bowdler, cited in More, op. cit., pp. 6-8.

⁴⁷Hannah More to Sir W. W. Pepys, 1821, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 317.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 316.

⁴⁹Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

Instruction in secular subjects, however, was never considered a primary concern of the schools. As Hannah More herself asserted, "To make good members of society (and this can only be done by making good Christians) has been my aim."⁵⁰ Thus, almost the entire content of the education provided by the schools was religious in nature. Hannah More described the curriculum of the schools as follows:

The grand subject of instruction with me is the Bible itself; the familiar use of which I greatly prefer to any abridgements, histories, or expositions. To infuse a large quantity of Scripture into their minds, with plain practical comments in the way of conversation, is the means which I have found, under Providence, instrumental in forming the principles and directing the hearts of youth. I usually make them get by heart some of the most important chapters... . The Psalms are, in particular, materials for devotion; and young people, having the most striking passages of Scripture by heart, are furnished with a little stock of ideas, to which the teacher can refer in his conversation with them, and it particularly enables them to understand what they hear at church. In order to do this more effectually, the teacher should inform them well in the different parts of the Liturgy, that they may distinguish between prayer and thanksgiving, petition and adoration. I delight much in familiarising them with the histories in Genesis, etc., as they furnish such abundant matter for practical illustration, and suggest striking applications to their own hearts and lives. I furnish my teachers with 'Burkitt's Exposition', which, being very sound and sober, restrains and directs the principles of the teacher, while it forms those of the child. Speculative doctrines I always avoid; but with the plain leading doctrines of Scripture as exemplified in our excellent Liturgy and Church Establishments, they ought to be well acquainted.⁵¹

Supplementing these sources of religious instruction were two little tracts written by Hannah More, called together, Questions for the Mendip Schools, the Church Catechism, broken into short questions, Spelling Books, Psalters, the Common Prayer Book, and Watts' Hymns for Children.⁵²

The teaching day commonly consisted of four classes, Bible,

⁵⁰Hannah More to a friend, cited in More, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

Testament, Psalter and Catechism, and Alphabet. On Sundays, these were followed by a prayer, a hymn, a part of the thirty-fourth Psalm and attendance at the parish church for divine worship.⁵³ On Sunday evenings, the parents and older children were invited to the schools where a sermon, written by an eminent divine and simplified by the More sisters, was read and discussed. On Tuesday evenings, the master or mistress of the school gave a 'plain exposition' of a selected passage of Scripture to parents and children, while on Wednesday evenings there was a class of religious instruction for adults.

The success of the schools in producing 'good Christians' is, and must remain, largely a matter of conjecture. Conversions to a 'vital' Christianity were comparatively rare, and, when they did occur, Miss Martha More gave them generous space in her journal. Like many other Evangelicals, the sisters and their teachers found the death-bed and funeral the most effective situations for producing a 'serious mind' and a reformation of the character. Mr. Younge, for example, wrote to Miss Martha More from the school at Nailsea describing the death of one of his girl students,

She sent for her brothers and mistress, and exhorted them, in a most striking manner, to attend there, expressing herself strongly respecting the state of her soul, and contrasting its present case with what it was before she went to Sunday School. She held the mistress by the hand, pointed to her brother, said she saw angels, and died. - The brothers, two great collier boys, now attend constantly.⁵⁴

Martha More added the comment, "This was a happy closing of the year '94." When Mrs. Baber, their most devout and successful teacher, died, her funeral was attended by all her former students and was made not only a heart-

⁵³Thompson, op. cit., pp. 96-97

⁵⁴More, op. cit., p. 138.

breaking farewell to a beloved teacher but a source of spiritual inspiration and instruction.⁵⁵

In spite of the occasional conversion, throughout the Mendip Annals there runs a tone of disappointment at the schools' failure to produce more 'vital' Christians. In 1793, for example, Martha recorded that at Shipham all could say their Catechism and read the Bible, yet there was still no great religious 'seriousness'.⁵⁶ Of their school at Axbridge, she reported, "We found the usual decency and regularity, particularly among the boys, who were much improved in reading, questions, etc., but, like the master and mistress, dumb in spiritual things."⁵⁷

If the More sisters were disappointed with their efforts to Christianise the local villagers to their own satisfaction, they were soon made aware that they had "abundantly humanised" them.⁵⁸ Theft, crimes of violence, and immorality all but disappeared from the villages,⁵⁹ and the poor began to take pride in their homes and dress; so much so that the sisters had to reprimand them on more than one occasion about their pride in the things of this world and their over-emphasis of mere respectability. Hannah More recorded that in one village the local women were ostracizing an unfortunate girl who had been guilty of immorality, and that she had been forced to reprimand them for their lack of charity.⁶⁰ It may well be that it was this newfound desire for respectability which

⁵⁵Miss Martha More's letter to Hannah describing the funeral of Mrs. Baber is, perhaps, the classic example of an Evangelical 'funeral letter' and illustrates the use made of the funeral as a teaching device. It is given in full in Appendix C, pp. 226-228.

⁵⁶More, op. cit., pp. 78-79

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 63

⁵⁹Infra., Appendix E, pp. 233-243.

⁶⁰Hannah More to a friend, 1792, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 501.

resulted in the great increase in church attendance. In Cheddar, for example, the congregation increased from 14 or 15 to over 500 and new pews had to be constructed. In fact, so successful were the schools in turning out respectable and trustworthy young men and women that 'graduates' from the schools were in high demand as servants and household staff among local gentry.⁶¹

The operation of so many different types of enterprises over such a large area presented many problems to two elderly ladies whose health was continually failing them. The most serious and persistent problem concerned the teachers. The men and women that the More sisters were looking for to teach in their schools were rare creatures indeed. Not only must they be reasonably well educated, but, more important, devout Christians, with a thorough knowledge of the Bible and Catechism. Even more limiting a factor was that their 'vitality' of religion must not be so great that it would lead them to 'over-enthusiastic' and 'Methodistic' practices. In fact, the sisters found very few teachers who 'fitted the bill' perfectly and they were often forced to compromise. Martha More wrote that for their school at Yatton they "procured a mistress from the village, a respectable woman, and of a grave, not to say religious, turn of mind [and] two masters, decent men but no more. Here lies the heavy part of our difficulty."⁶² Occasionally, in desperation, the sisters hired men and women who openly professed their Methodism, though Hannah

⁶¹More, op. cit., p. 143

⁶²Ibid., p. 40.

More would admit this to no-one but Wilberforce.⁶³

The problems which these 'enthusiastic' teachers caused were considerably greater than those associated with teachers who were religious but 'unenthusiastic'. A certain Mrs. Thompson, whom they employed to teach at the Yatton and Congresbury school, grew so bold as to indulge in extempore prayer. The sisters were eventually forced to dismiss her, whereupon she remained in the village, "carried on an evening reading in competition, [and] inflamed the people with wild, enthusiastic expressions."⁶⁴

In fact, the More sisters were attempting to steer a course between 'Methodistic enthusiasm', which rapidly antagonised all the respectable elements in the community, and Anglican orthodoxy, which seemed to fail to produce any visible religious results. The failure to maintain this difficult course led to several altercations with local clergymen and gentry, and was eventually to lead to the Blagdon Controversy.⁶⁵

A further problem which continually beset the sisters was the opposition they encountered from some local farmers and, occasionally, members of the gentry. Hannah More well knew that her plans had little prospect of success without the support of local influential people, and she and her sister spent much time and effort in attempting to win them over to their cause. It was a difficult and thankless task. Typical of the opposition they encountered was Mr. B-., a rich farmer and overseer

⁶³For example, in a letter to Wilberforce, Hannah More informed him that she had hired a Miss Easterbrook as under-teacher for the Cheddar school and went on to remark, "I hope Miss Wilberforce will not be frightened, but I am afraid she must be called a Methodist."

Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1789, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 451-452.

⁶⁴More, op. cit., p. 202

⁶⁵Infra., Chapter IV.

of the parish of Wedmore. After a forlorn attempt to get signatures for a petition against the proposed school,

he then vented his rage, in the most abusive language, upon the poor, powerless curate, foaming with passion, and declaring that the day the school was opened would be the beginning of such rebellion in England as had taken place in Ireland and France.⁶⁶

Even the More sisters were unable to win him over. The outraged Mr. B. succeeded in preventing the sisters from purchasing any local building and forced them to hold their first classes in a local orchard.⁶⁷

Occasionally, the local gentry made valiant, if unsuccessful, attempts to disrupt the work of the sisters. At Shipham, "an infamous woman of depraved character" set up a ball to lure the young people from the evening classes, and the sisters were forced to use their influence with the local Justice of the Peace to put a stop to the dancing.⁶⁸ On another occasion, "Mrs. S., a great lady of the village of Draycott, threw out the temptation of a glass of gin any time they [the villagers] kept from the school, and used her lawful power by not suffering her servant boy to attend."⁶⁹ Miss Martha More sorrowfully noted, "The gin was firmly rejected at first, but we fear has had some influence since."⁷⁰

The financial problems of running such a diverse set of operations were, of course, considerable. The cost of operating one Sunday School was calculated to be about £100 a year,⁷¹ and to this had to be added the

⁶⁶More, op. cit., p. 212

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 93. The local magistrate almost certainly was asked to enforce the Proclamation against Vice and Immorality referred to, infra. Chapter VII. p. 161.

⁶⁹More, op. cit., p. 60

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Infra., Appendix A, pp. 215-218.

expenses of operating the women's clubs and relieving distressed villages in times of depression. Wilberforce had agreed to provide the major portion of the expenses, and he kept a steady flow of funds directed to Cowslip Green and later Barley Wood. At the outset of the operation, in 1789, he wrote to Hannah More,

Your plan is a very good one, As for the expense, the best proof you can give me that you believe me hearty in the cause, or sincere in the wishes expressed in the former part of this letter, is to call on me for money without reserve. Besides, I have a rich banker in London, Mr. H. Thornton, whom I cannot oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these.⁷²

In 1798, he wrote in the same vein and assured her, "I can appropriate as large a sum as may be requisite for your operations."⁷³ His influence with the Clapham Sect had guaranteed several other contributions, and in the same year he again wrote to Hannah More,

I have talked with Henry Thornton concerning the Somersetshire operations, and we have agreed that £400 per annum should be allotted by us to that service. Mrs. Bouverie's money in Henry Thornton's hands is to furnish £200, and he and I £100 each I need not say anything in addition to what I have before expressed of my earnest impetration that you bear in mind that your best contribution a thousand times over is of trouble, time and personal exertions, and your great object should be how you can furnish these in the most abundant measure and the longest continuance.⁷⁴

In addition to the generous contributions of her friends in London, Miss More used all her influence and political skill to persuade local people to contribute to the expenses of operating the schools. On one occasion, by bringing together the children of several parishes to the

⁷²Wilberforce to Hannah More, 1789, Wilberforce, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 246-247.

⁷³Wilberforce to Hannah More, 1798, ibid., Vol. II. p. 300.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 301.

feast day, she literally shamed a group of farmers into providing clothes for the children of a school. "The rich frigid farmers of Banwell, once so hostile to us, could not endure the disgrace of their ragged parish at the dinner. They have therefore united, made a purse, given the boys a handsome blue coat, and the girls a shawl."⁷⁵ Even more effective as a method of obtaining subscriptions to the schools was to make local people feel personally connected with their operations. Every person of any consequence in the district was invited to attend the annual feast day, which was always preceded by a social gathering at the sisters' cottage. At this gathering of the 'superior company', local people were made to feel they really counted, and were subjected to considerable, if unspoken, social pressure to donate something to the schools, the children of which were shortly to be seen at their best during the feast.

In spite of these several sources of income, the More sisters, Hannah particularly, were forced to spend large sums of their own money in operating the schools and women's clubs.⁷⁶ As the years went by, even Wilberforce appears to have found it more and more difficult to contribute what he considered to be his fair share. In 1826, he sent her £10, wishing it was £100, and excusing himself, "But my four sons press heavy on me."⁷⁷ By 1829, Hannah More was spending £250 a year of her own money

⁷⁵More, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

⁷⁶Supra., p. 88.

⁷⁷Wilberforce to Hannah More, May 21, 1826, Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Correspondence of William Wilberforce, John Murray, London, 1840. Vol. II. p. 500.

in maintaining her schools,⁷⁸ though there is nothing in her correspondence that suggests she begrudged one penny of it.

In fact, the problem of finding money to finance their operation appears to have worried the sisters less than the difficulties they faced in attempting to inspect the work of each school. Travel in the Mendips was impossible during the winter months, since much of the country was under water and the roads impassable. The villages were thus totally isolated for almost half the year, although the occasional letter from the teachers reached the sisters and kept them informed of the progress of the schools. In the summer months, however, the sisters tried to visit each school at least once a week. The distances involved were considerable, one village being fifteen miles from their cottage. All travel had to be undertaken on horseback and the sisters found it exhausting work.

As they grew older and more infirm in health, they were forced, however reluctantly, to relinquish direct control of the schools. In fact, after Martha died in 1819, Hannah rarely left her cottage, and shortly after employed a Miss Frowd to look after her affairs and inspect the schools together with the squire of Cheddar.

By this time, the extent of the operation had been slowly but surely cut down. The great feast days proved to be too exhausting a feat of organisation for the two elderly ladies and were discontinued. Those schools which seemed to be bearing little fruit or which caused any serious problems of management were reluctantly closed down or given into other hands. By 1825, only the 'great' schools at Cheddar, Shipham, and

⁷⁸Hannah More to Wilberforce, Oct. 27, 1828, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 442.

Nailsea and the women's clubs in these villages were under the control of Hannah More.

She had given instructions that, on her death, the schools were to be closed and the operation discontinued. In 1833 this was done. However, it seems certain that the 'National Society' stepped quickly into the gap, in some cases taking over the existing buildings.⁷⁹

The great contribution of the More sisters to the moral and physical well-being of the Mendip laborers and miners had been accomplished long before Hannah More's death. By demonstrating to the poor that 'God helps those who help themselves', they had engendered a new spirit of self respect among them. In fact, although the sisters had succeeded in their aim of humanising the poor and, to a certain extent, in their aim of Christianising them, they had defeated themselves in their object of making them content with their lot in life. The poor would never be completely content, and their children, born into villages where schools already existed, would look upon education not as a charity but as a right. It is in producing this change of attitude among the poor that the real significance of the Mendip Operation lies.

⁷⁹Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

CHAPTER V

THE BLAGDON CONTROVERSY

The Blagdon Controversy began in 1800 as a dispute between one of Hannah More's school-teachers at Blagdon and the local curate. Within a year, it had developed into a full-scale war between the Evangelical Party and the Orthodox element in the Church. The local and national periodicals became involved in the dispute, and no less than twenty three pamphlets were published arguing the merits of one side or the other.¹ For bitter invective and total lack of charity or even decency, the controversy has rarely, if ever, been equalled. Hannah More and her friends not unaptly called it "the Blagdon Persecution."²

The suddenness and rapidity with which the original dispute mushroomed into a national cause célèbre should not blind one to the fact that the seeds of controversy had been sown several years earlier. At Blagdon, they were to bear their fruit.

It has already been suggested that Hannah More had been treading on dangerous ground since she established her first school at Cheddar.³ It was not only that she had aroused the enmity of those local farmers and members of the gentry who felt that even a limited education for the lower orders would spell the end of 'the rule of property'; before long,

¹Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1961. pp. 539-541.

²M. A. Hopkins, Hannah More and Her Circle, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1947. p. 185.

³Supra., Chapter IV, pp. 83, 84 and 91.

she had lost the support of many local clergymen and laymen who were in favour of educating the poor.

To begin with, although she constantly professed her dislike of Methodism, she had several times employed Methodists as teachers in her schools. For this, Wilberforce was partly to blame. At the outset of the Mendip Operation in 1789, he wrote to Hannah More,

Now for the mission...indeed, I fear with you nothing can be done in the regular way. But these poor people must not, therefore, be suffered to continue in their present lamentable state of darkness. You told me they never saw the sun but one day in the year, and the moon appeared but once a week for an hour or two. ...My advice is, send for a comet - Whiston had them at command, and John Wesley is not unprovided. Take care, however, that eccentricity is not his only recommendation, and, if possible, see and converse with the man before he is determined on.⁴

The sun represented the rector, the moon the local vicar or curate, and the comet a Methodist. Wilberforce should have realised that, sooner or later, some local clergyman was bound to object to having a Methodist teach in a Sunday school attached to his church.

Equally disturbing to some local clergymen was the character of the religious instruction given in the Sunday schools, and particularly in the evening classes for older children and adults. True, the children and adults were instructed in the Catechism and were brought to church every Sunday; but they were also expected to listen to sermons which were often not written by members of the Church of England. One of the most damning indictments brought against the More sisters during the Blagdon Controversy was provided by a Mrs. Parsons, who swore on oath that she recollected Mrs. Martha More recommending a sermon, and observing that "it

⁴Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, J. Murray, London, 1839. Vol. I. p. 247.

was a very excellent one, it was not written by one of the Church of England, BUT THAT SHE DID NOT REGARD."⁵ Frequently, the interpretations of Scripture given by 'enthusiastic' teachers directly contradicted those of the local clergyman. Most distressing of all to the Orthodox, several of Miss More's teachers were bold enough to indulge in extempore prayer and to imitate other Methodistic devices.⁶

The suspicions of local friends of the Establishment were further heightened by the occasional conversion of influential laymen to Evangelicalism and by Hannah More's success in obtaining livings for known Evangelical curates. Martha More, for example, expressed her great joy at the conversion of Mr. Hyde, the brother of the most influential farmer in Cheddar.⁷ What the Orthodox felt about this happy event is not mentioned. In 1791, Mr. Jones, a favorite of the sisters, was presented to the living of Shipham.⁸ Mr. Boake, another staunch Evangelical, was in the same year and through Hannah's influence, appointed curate of both Cheddar and Axbridge.⁹ Of the former vicar of Axbridge, Martha had written, "The black shades of his character are too melancholy even to be sketched here."¹⁰ When Mr. Boake left Cheddar in 1796, he was succeeded by young Mr. Drewitt, an equally fervent Evangelical and close friend of

⁵Thomas Bere, 'The Controversy between Miss Hannah More and the Curate of Blagdon relative to the Conduct of her Teacher of the Sunday School in that Parish, with the original Letters,' cited in The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9. July, 1801. p. 284.

⁶Supra., Chapter IV. p. 97.

⁷Martha More, (ed. William Roberts), The Mendip Annals, The Journal of Martha More, James Nisbett and Co., London, 1859. p. 78.

⁸Supra., Chapter IV. p. 90.

⁹More, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 41.

the More sisters. On the occasion of his appointment, Martha made the following comment:

I must not forget an attention of the rector, and a compliment of the bishop, who both agreed no clergyman should come to Cheddar but with our entire approbation, and no one who would not assist and countenance of all our schemes.¹¹

If this agreement has been public knowledge, there is no doubt that many people would have considered it a very sinister arrangement. Fortunately, the enemies of Miss More failed to learn of this 'understanding' during the Blagdon Controversy.

In those parishes which were not blessed with Evangelical clergymen, Hannah More sought to introduce, as often as possible, visiting preachers of suitable religious views. The visit of Newton to Cowslip Green and his preaching in the neighbourhood have already been referred to.¹² In 1798, before establishing their school at Wedmore, the sisters succeeded in obtaining the pulpit of that parish for Mr. Boake.¹³ In the same year, the Orthodox incumbent of Yatton was incensed to discover Mr. Biddulph, a famous Evangelical preacher, giving the sermon at the anniversary meeting of the Yatton and Congresbury schools.¹⁴

Thus, there was some justification for the Orthodox believing that the More sisters were building up an extensive and powerful organisation in the district, which was certainly partially, and perhaps totally, independent of the Church, and yet exercising a considerable influence on the Church. If, in fact, the sisters were, in the words of

¹¹Ibid., p. 184.

¹²Supra., Chapter IV. pp. 90-91.

¹³More, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 216.

the woman of the local poor-house, 'Wesleying',¹⁵ how much more subversive and dangerous must this organisation be!

If conditions in the parishes served by Miss More's schools were ripe for controversy, those in the country at large were equally so. The same arguments that were put forward by the Mendip farmers against the education of the poor were heard all over England.¹⁶ Many of the most ardent supporters of Sunday schools were becoming more and more insistent that they be completely under the direction of the local clergyman.

"Schools of Jacobinical politics abound in this country," said Dr. Samuel Horsely, Bishop of Rochester, in his 'Charge' to the clergy of his diocese in 1800. "In them the minds of many of the lowest orders are taught to despise religion and the laws of subordination. Sunday schools must be under clerical inspection and control."¹⁷

By 1800, the friends of the Established Church were already aware that a new, powerful and sinister influence was making itself felt in the Church. Wilberforce and his friends had begun to obtain livings for Evangelical clergy, who were, by this time, known as 'gospel ministers'. The influence of Wilberforce on Pitt was well known and much exaggerated. In 1799, Peter Pindar, in his Nil Admirari, or Smile at a Bishop,¹⁸ had cruelly satirised Bishop Porteus' admiration for Hannah More. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham, was thought to be an Evangelical sympathiser and quite possibly a member of the 'school of Wilberforce'. For the

¹⁵Supra., Chapter IV. p. 83.

¹⁶See, for example, the letters of Eusebius and A Southern Faunist, Supra., Chapter II, pp.26-27.

¹⁷M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952. p. 173.

¹⁸Peter Pindar, Nil Admirari, or A Smile at a Bishop, West and Hughes, London, 1799.

Orthodox, the rapid increase in the number of Methodists was a cause for concern; but the possibility of there being Methodists in the Church itself was horrifying.

Less than a year before the Blagdon Controversy broke out, the Anti-Jacobin, in discussing a review of Hannah More's Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, had professed its "very sincere respect for Mrs. More and her friends and admirers,"¹⁹ but at the same time had solemnly warned that "if Mrs. M. be really of Mr. Wilberforce's school, her faith ... is Calvinism in disguise, and her attachment to the Church of England of a very questionable kind."²⁰ A year later, the same periodical devoted fifteen pages to an article entitled 'Schism and Schismatics', in which it lamented the presence of Methodists in the Church and asserted, "The growth of Schism in these kingdoms is, we are concerned to say, very rapid; and calls loudly for the utmost vigilance and exertion of the Clergy of the Established Church."²¹ Mr. Bere, the curate of Blagdon, may well have read the article. Within two months of its publication, the Blagdon Controversy had reached the national press, and focussed these fears, suspicions and prejudices on a small village in a remote part of Somerset.

Ironically, Blagdon was the only village where the More sisters had to be persuaded to open a school. In 1795, a deputation from the village, consisting of the overseer, churchwarden and curate, visited

¹⁹The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 5. January to April, 1800. p. 326.

²⁰Ibid., p. 330.

²¹Ibid., Vol. 8. January to April 1801. p. 95.

the sisters and requested them "to come and do their parish a little good."²² Martha More noted at the time that "the parish exceeded in wickedness, if possible, any we had hitherto taken in hand."²³ Hannah More, in a letter to Wilberforce, described the opening of the school.

On Sunday [I] was enabled to open the school. It was an affecting sight. Several of the grown-up youths had been tried at the last assizes: three were the children of a person lately condemned to be hanged; - many thieves! all ignorant, profane, and vicious beyond belief! Of this banditti we have enlisted one hundred and seventy; and when the clergyman, a hard man, who is also a magistrate, saw these creatures kneeling round us, whom he had seldom seen but to commit or punish in some way, he burst into tears. I can do them little good, I fear, but the grace of God can do all. Your friend, Henry Thornton thought we ought to try.²⁴

Mr. Younge and his wife, who had previously been at Nailsea,²⁵ were installed as teachers of the school.

According to Martha More's Journal, the school prospered. In 1796, the adult evening classes were introduced with Mr. Bere's approval, and throughout 1797 reports from Blagdon indicated that all was going well.²⁶

The following year, however, the first rumblings of discontent were heard, not only in Blagdon but elsewhere. As Martha More noted, "Our worldly clergy began now to be busy, and set their faces pretty strongly against our little righteous sect."²⁷ The 'worldly clergy' were not long in taking the offensive. Mr. Boake was succeeded at Axbridge by a curate who opposed the evening readings and threatened to set up his own evening class. Only when encouraged by the sisters to do so did he drop the idea.²⁸

²²More, op. cit., p. 166

²³Ibid.

²⁴Hannah More to Wilberforce, Oct. 14, 1795. William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836. Vol. I. p. 567.

²⁵Supra., Chapter IV. p. 81.

²⁶More, op. cit., p. 197.

²⁷Ibid., p. 215

²⁸Ibid., pp. 214-215.

The rector of Rowberrow began to lure away the older boys from the school at Shipham "that they might become singers and increase his congregation."²⁹ Martha added darkly, "It was a wicked action, and he will find he must account for it at the day of judgement."³⁰ Mr. Bere had already had second thoughts about the desirability of having Miss More's school in his parish, and was discouraging the local poor from attending the Sunday school and the evening readings. Mr. Bere was a magistrate and "a hard man to displease"; the numbers at the evening classes dropped from 200 to 35.³¹ Fortunately in this instance, the sisters were able to persuade him to change his mind about the school, and, within a few weeks, things were back to normal.

In 1799, just as things had settled down in Blagdon, a veritable explosion occurred in Wedmore, where the school had been in operation less than a year.³² The master of the school, Mr. Harvon, whom Hannah More had appointed against the wishes of the local clergyman, was accused of being a Methodist. A petition, organised by the heads of the parish, was presented to the Dean of Wells. It listed the complaints against Mr. Harvon, pointed out that he was not licensed to teach,³³ and requested that he be dismissed.³⁴ It is significant that the petition was not sent to Hannah More; the leaders of the parish realised that they would get little

²⁹Ibid., p. 217.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid., p. 215

³²Hannah More's letter to Wilberforce explaining the history of the Wedmore Controversy is given in the Appendices. Infra., Appendix D. pp. 230-231.

³³The villagers had indicted Harvon under an old and, by then, obsolete statute that required all teachers to be members of the Church of England and licensed by the local Bishop.

³⁴More, op. cit., pp. 225-226.

satisfaction from that quarter. Once again, however, Miss More was able to smooth things over ³⁵ and, although she dismissed the teacher, the school stayed open. Martha More bitterly observed, "Hannah was obliged to write letters to Mr. Moss and other high powers, and use all her influence to enable us to go 28 miles of a Sunday, instruct their poor and spend 70 pounds a year on them".³⁶ At the beginning of 1800, Martha reported that all the schools were doing well.³⁷ In April, the Blagdon Controversy broke out.

In its early stages, the Controversy resolved itself into a conflict of personalities. The schoolmaster of Blagdon, Mr. Younge, was perhaps the most 'enthusiastic' of all the sisters' teachers. Moreover, he was proud, resentful of Mr. Bere's authority, and acutely conscious of his need to 'suffer for his faith'. Mr. Bere was equally proud, had an aversion to anything which smacked of Methodism, and was almost hysterically resentful of the More sisters' influence in the district. Doctor Crossman, Mr. Bere's rector, was a timid man, incapable of making a decision, and referred every difficulty to Doctor Moss, the Chancellor. Doctor Moss, who was to occupy a key position in the Controversy, was very ambitious and a good friend of the More sisters, of whose influence with the Bishop of London he was well aware. His father, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, was so old and infirm that most troublesome matters were concealed from him. It is doubtful if he ever really understood what the Blagdon Controversy was about. Hannah More was fully aware of the power and influence she possessed. She had faced disputes before and come out on top. It is quite possible that she

³⁵Infra., Appendix D. pp. 230-231. ³⁶More, op. cit., p. 225.

³⁷Ibid., p. 227.

had an emotional attitude towards the parish of Blagdon. When a girl of barely twenty, she had become close friends with John Langhorne, then the vicar of Blagdon.³⁸ It must have been galling for her to see Mr. Bere lording it over the parish, where she could quite possibly have been lady of the vicarage. Given a Methodistic teacher, a resentful curate, a timid rector, an ambitious Chancellor, a Bishop in his dotage, the confident and unconciliatory Hannah More, and the division of the countryside into two camps, the struggle that ensued was both logical and inevitable.

Mr. Bere had been suspicious of Younge's evening classes for some time. Early in 1799, he requested his wife to attend one and report to him her findings. Mrs. Bere was horrified at what she found. Mr. Younge, after listing the persecutions he had endured for his faith, questioned each of the class on his or her spiritual state and cautioned them not to reveal what had taken place at the meeting. It may well be that he set out deliberately to offend Mrs. Bere, for when, after the meeting, she observed to him that she hoped these poor ignorant people were not deceiving themselves, he replied, with obvious displeasure, "Perhaps, Madam, you have not sought the Lord in the same way they have," and abruptly left the room.³⁹

Mrs. Bere informed her husband of what had occurred at the meeting and he wrote to Hannah More, complaining of Mr. Younge's Methodistic

³⁸ See the correspondence between Hannah More and John Langhorne, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 18-23.

³⁹ Bere, op. cit., cited in The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9, July, 1801. p. 283.

practices.⁴⁰ Hannah was suffering from one of her illnesses and did not reply for several months. Eventually, she sent a brief note informing Mr. Bere that Martha would reprimand Younge. Mr. Bere was not satisfied; he insisted that Younge be dismissed. Miss More, not accustomed to being ordered about by a mere curate, refused, and suggested that the matter be referred to Sir Abraham Elton, a local magistrate, mine-owner and great admirer of the More sisters. Bere, not surprisingly, refused, and sent his complaints against Younge to Dr. Crossman, who dutifully forwarded them to Dr. Moss. Hannah then sent her own complaints against Bere to Dr. Moss, charging that he was hampering her work in his parish. Dr. Moss was in a dilemma. The clergyman was unquestionably within his rights, yet he did not want to offend Miss More. Finally, he recommended that Younge be dismissed and replaced with a more Orthodox teacher.

The battle was now fairly joined. Mr. Bere openly accused Miss More of aiding and abetting Methodistic practices and questioned her loyalty to the Church. Sir Abraham Elton undertook to champion the cause of Hannah and, at an anniversary meeting of the Shipham schools, denounced Bere as having preached against the Trinity. Martha was delighted with the speech. "He took up our cause," she wrote, "and defended it in the most able manner, in all its parts."⁴¹ Hannah was equally gratified, and followed

⁴⁰The following account of the Controversy is based on several sources, the chief of which are: The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9. July, 1801. pp. 277-296, Brown, op. cit., pp. 187-233, Jones, op. cit., pp. 172-183, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. pp. 43-88, and More, op. cit., pp. 227-240.

⁴¹More, op. cit., p. 229.

up this attack with others. In a letter to a friend, she wrote,

Sir A. Elton has stood forth in so manly, decided and Christian manner, that it has given a new turn to public opinion, which would not have been influenced by the same zeal and abilities in a man of inferior rank and credit. Such is this world! I prevailed upon him to preach again at our second club at Cheddar, a few days ago, in order to follow up the blow, lest the first sermon might be construed into a sudden ebullition of zeal. I believe we had 14 clergymen. The Tudways (he is a member for Wells), all the neighbouring gentry, about 1,400 people at Church. It is a kind of struggle whether Christian instruction shall be continued or abolished in this county. And these two public days strengthened our side of the question materially. ... We entertained about 70 of the gentry at dinner - acting like the rest of the world, giving a dinner to those who did not want it, and only tea to many, many hundred who had no dinner at home.⁴²

Mr. Bere was no match for Miss More in influencing those who counted.

Not only did Sir Abraham swing public opinion behind Miss More, he succeeded in persuading Chancellor Moss, and thus Dr. Crossman, that it would be unjust to dismiss Younge without a public hearing of the charges made against him. Mr. Bere was informed that he must make his accusations public. This Mr. Bere did, and in a manner that proved him to be a worthy adversary for Hannah More. He called a meeting of clergymen and local gentry, carefully chosen by himself from his most ardent supporters, and presented his evidence of Younge's 'Methodism' to this rather irregular tribunal. The meeting unanimously recommended that Younge be dismissed. While Sir Abraham manfully protested that the tribunal had no jurisdiction over Miss More's schools, the Chancellor regretfully accepted its recommendations and Younge was, at last, dismissed. In November, 1800, Miss More, refusing to operate a school in a village where the clergyman was not fully in favour of her schemes, closed the school in

⁴²Ibid., pp. 231-232.

Blagdon,⁴³ a serious tactical error, since it was to appear later that she had done so in a fit of pique. The Controversy seemed to be over, and Dr. Crossman, although regretting the closing of the school, sent his congratulations to Mr. Bere on his success in getting rid of the Methodist teacher.

In December, Bishop Moss and his son were in London, and there the 'sinister influence' of the 'school of Wilberforce' soon made itself felt. There is little doubt that Chancellor Moss was contacted by Wilberforce, and perhaps also by Bishop Porteus, and shown clearly where lay the road to preferment. There can be no other explanation for the dramatic about-face of the Chancellor when he returned to Somerset.

In January, 1801, Mr. Bere was suddenly informed by Dr. Crossman that Dr. Moss had received proof that he (Mr. Bere) had preached against the Trinity and conducted himself in a manner unfitting for a clergyman.⁴⁴ Dr. Crossman regretfully asked Mr. Bere to resign his curacy and, when he refused to do so, informed him that he was dismissed and that Mr. Drewitt, a close friend of the More sisters, was to be appointed to the living. Mr. Bere's appeals to the Bishop were ignored, and the dispute seemed to be resolved again, this time in favour of Miss More and her allies. The school at Blagdon was re-opened and Younge was re-instated as teacher.

With all the self-righteousness of a wronged man, Mr. Bere steadfastly ignored the instructions of his rector, his Chancellor and his Bishop and remained in Blagdon. Learning that his final appeal to the

⁴³Henry Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838. pp. 184-185.

⁴⁴In fact, Mr. Bere had committed no ecclesiastical offence, the main charge against him being that he had rung the church bells when he learned that Younge was to be dismissed.

Bishop had been refused, he set off for London, armed with a pamphlet he had written and all the correspondence he possessed on the dispute, to seek allies as powerful as those Miss More had employed against him. They were not hard to find. Miss More had committed a grave error in getting Mr. Bere dismissed. Not only was his dismissal irregular and possibly illegal, but Mr. Bere now appeared as "the victim of ecclesiastical tyrrany."⁴⁵ He was no longer the persecutor but the persecuted and, as such, gained a considerable amount of sympathy.

Bere's pamphlet, published early in 1801, was the first of a whole series, each containing more bitter invective and a greater distortion of truth than the previous one. The London periodicals added further fuel to the flames by taking sides in the dispute. The Anti-Jacobin and later Cobbett's Weekly Political Register took up the cause of the injured Mr. Bere and, not too incorrectly, diagnosed the affair at Blagdon as a small but important skirmish in the great war against 'the school of Wilberforce' and schismatics in general. The British Critic, though suspicious of Methodists in the Church, refused to believe that Miss More and her allies were guilty of anything irregular, and devoted all its efforts to discrediting Mr. Bere and his faction. The Christian Observer, begun and controlled by Evangelicals, was ardently anti-Bere and pro-More.

The British Critic was the first to take up arms. In April, 1801, it reviewed the pamphlet of Mr. Bere very unfavorably, pointing out that several of the key witnesses against Younge were "old women, who cannot

⁴⁵Jones, op. cit., p. 174.

write their name."⁴⁶ The review concluded,

On our part, it is a matter of justice to add, that it is a fact well known and confirmed by the testimony of all the clergymen resident in the parishes where Mrs. More had established schools, that she invariably places them under the direction and control of the officiating ministers; that she does nothing without their approbation; that she guards her schools with the greatest vigilance against the appearance of enthusiasm; ...⁴⁷

The Anti-Jacobin replied by publishing a letter, signed E.S., which repudiated The British Critic's claim that the schools were under the control of the local clergymen.

Mrs. More's schools are not and never have been under the direction and control of the officiating clergyman, except where that clergyman chances to cooperate in the same views with her, or is what is termed a Gospel minister.⁴⁸

In July, the Anti-Jacobin gave its first review of the Blagdon Controversy. It ran to some twenty pages and gave fair warning of the stand that John Gifford, the editor, would take on the issue. The original dispute and all the evidence that Mr. Bere had to offer were reviewed. Miss More, Dr. Moss and Dr. Crossman were all censured for their failure to dismiss Younge immediately they learned of Mr. Bere's wishes.

.... we must state our sentiments on what appears to us to be a gross impropriety of conduct, both in Mrs. More and Dr. Crossman. In the first place, we conceive it to have been the duty of Mrs. More the moment she learnt that there existed a difference between them, to dismiss the master; respect for the situation of the complainant, and for that church of which he was a minister, imperiously dictated the necessity of such a proceeding..... It is evident that both Dr. CROSSMAN and Dr. MOSS were decidedly of this opinion; though why they were afterwards induced to think otherwise, they have not had the con-

⁴⁶The British Critic, Vol. 17, April, 1801. p. 444.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9, June, 1801. p. 202.

descension to inform us, and we have not the ingenuity to discover.⁴⁹

Miss More was further censured for her failure to inform Mr. Bere that she had lodged charges against him with his rector.

Sir Abraham's defence of Miss More and Younge was dismissed as "gross, fulsome, and offensive; it removes no imputation; it rebuts no argument; it confutes no fact; but ... it disgraces alike the object of it, and the person by whom it is lavished."⁵⁰

Sir Abraham may, if he please, fall prostrate before the shrine of the idol which he has raised up to himself; and lavish his incense with senseless profusion; but let not his temerity condemn those whose sober reason resists such idolatry; and who think they see, in such glaring enthusiasm, fair ground for believing in the existence of a mind more ready to censure by words, than to reject, by actions, the bold and fanatical vagaries of Methodism.⁵¹

The whole question of whether adults should receive instruction in evening classes was then raised. Surely, it cannot be in the best interests of the poor for them to waste a Sunday evening, which could be spent in "harmless and inoffensive" recreation, listening to sermons given by laymen.

We have long had our apprehensions that in our laudable anxiety to avoid the Scylla of licentiousness we run some risk of falling into the Charybdis of Puritanism. ... We shall add but one other observation on this head; which is, that all Sunday schools whatever should be under the immediate superintendence and absolute control of the clergyman of the parish.⁵²

Of Mr. Bere's dismissal from his curacy, the Anti-Jacobin expressed all the indignation of which it was capable, and attributed it to some sinister influence at work within the Church.

... it certainly ... does strike us as a most extraordinary thing, that the Bishop and the Chancellor should have condemned and punished

⁴⁹Ibid., July, 1801. p. 280

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 291

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., p. 287.

a clergyman of the established Church unheard, and without even informing him of the precise charges on which they proceeded to pronounce judgement; Upon the whole we cannot but refer the strange conclusion of this strange business to the exertion of some secret but powerful influence, which it would be less difficult perhaps to define than to control. The exertion of such influence, we most earnestly deprecate as hostile to the true interests of the established Church; but should it continue to be exerted, in the present instance, we shall feel it to be a duty incumbent upon us ... to explore its devious course, and to unfold its private recesses to the public eye.⁵³

The article concluded with the self-righteousness that was typical of all concerned in the Controversy.

We have now discharged our duty, which, however painful it may prove, we shall always endeavour to discharge, sincerely and resolutely. Great as our respect for Mrs. More is, and it is unfeignedly great, our respect for truth, our respect for the Established Church is still greater; and the interests of these are paramount considerations, which no earthly inducements shall ever lead us to sacrifice.⁵⁴

The publicity given to Mr. Bere's dismissal and the attacks on Dr. Crossman and the Mosses had their effect. Anna Seward, for example, who previously had been only too glad to number Miss More among her acquaintances, now revealed to her friends what she had long suspected, that the More sisters were promoting Methodist principles in their neighborhood. She harped on Newton's visit and his sermons in the Mendips, and noted, "Miss H. More expressed to me at her own house, admiration of the despicable rant we had heard, the preceding Sunday."⁵⁵ In a letter to a Mrs. Childers, she wrote,

How egregiously has Miss H. More exposed herself to the reproach of that absurd and intolerant methodism with which I have long be-

⁵³Ibid., pp. 288-289

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 296.

⁵⁵Anna Seward to Mr. Whalley, Nov. 19, 1801. Anna Seward, The Letters of Anna Seward, 1784 - 1807, Vol. V. p. 411.

lieved her tainted? I refer you for the proof to the Anti-Jacobin Review for July last.⁵⁶

In September, 1801, Mr. Bere was reinstated as curate of Blagdon, and Hannah More once again closed her school there. Mr. Bere and his faction were, of course, highly gratified. The Anti-Jacobin, with forced solemnity, observed,

We trust that Miss More and her advocates will derive a salutary lesson from such a termination of the contest; that they will perceive, no influence, however powerful, can long favour deception, or prevail against the Church.⁵⁷

Hannah, always sensitive to public opinion, was almost prostrate with grief and disappointment. She had remained silent in the ruthless war of pamphleteering, content to direct the attacks of her friends upon the enemy, sometimes even editing their pamphlets before they went to press. Now her cause was lost. In a letter to Wilberforce she wrote,

In Blagdon is still "a voice heard, lamentation and mourning," and at Cowslip "Rachel is still weeping for her children, and refuses to be comforted because they are not" instructed. This heavy blow has almost bowed me to the ground. It was only last night I began to get a little sleep. My reason and my religion assure me that it is permitted by that gracious being, who uses sometimes bad men for his instruments; but religion and reason do not much operate upon the nerves.⁵⁸

If the controversy was over as far as Blagdon was concerned, for the pamphleteers and the periodicals which reviewed them and passed judgment it was just warming up. Edward Spencer, in his pamphlet, Truth respecting Miss More's Meeting Houses, insisted that Miss More had de-

⁵⁶Anna Seward to Mrs. Childers, Dec. 23, 1801, Ibid. p. 432.

⁵⁷The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9, Sept. 1801. p. 395.

⁵⁸Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1801, Roberts, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 75.

liberately set out to encourage Methodism in her schools. She was, in fact, a Methodist herself. Had she not attended communion at Jay's chapel in Bath? Doubts were even cast on her moral character, and it was suggested that her students were lacking in sobriety and chastity.⁵⁹

In February, 1802, Cobbett entered the fray, broadening its scope to a frontal attack on the whole Evangelical party. In a letter to a Mr. Abercrombie of Philadelphia,⁶⁰ who had expressed an interest in the Blagdon Controversy, Cobbett gave vent to his outraged feelings.

I lament with you ... that a lady, who has laboured so zealously in the cause of virtue and religion should have been made the instrument in proceedings, which certainly tend to the utter subversion of the established Church of this kingdom. ...

The Sect, Sir, who have engendered all this disturbance, mischief, and disgrace, are not ... mere misguided fanatics, newly born, and destined soon to die. They are cool, of consummate cunning, of great industry and perseverance, and supported by men of no little wealth; and they possess all the influence, which coolness, cunning, industry, perseverance, and wealth united, can give.⁶¹

Cobbett went on to warn his readers that this 'sect' had "scaled the walls of the Church, [and that] the puritans of the present day are very little better than those of the disgraceful era" of the regicide parliament.⁶² Having informed Mr. Abercrombie of the true nature of the Blagdon

⁵⁹Edward Spencer, 'Truth respecting Miss More's Meeting Houses,' cited in The British Critic, Vol. 19, June, 1802, p. 663.

⁶⁰The interest of North America in the Controversy is not as surprising as it might, at first, appear. Hannah More's didactic writings and Cheap Repository were extremely popular in the United States. Her Coelebs was to sell over 30,000 copies there. As late as 1837, Harriet Martineau, during her tour of the United States, discovered that Hannah More was the most talked about English author.*

*Vera Wheatly, The Life and Work of Harriet Martineau, Secker and Warburg, London, 1957, p. 182.

⁶¹Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, 27 February, 1802, pp. 174-175.

⁶²Ibid.

dispute, he proceeded to attack The British Critic for abandoning its principles and going over to the enemy.

In June of the same year, he renewed this offensive against The British Critic. "Did you, could you possibly hope," wrote Cobbett, "that the press of the whole country was so venal and so base as to refuse justice to the poor, the oppressed, and the calumniated curate of Blagdon?"⁶³ Miss More had been proved a Methodist; yet The British Critic still supported her. How was it possible that a publication, professedly pro-Church, could give aid and comfort to the enemy? What sinister influence was at work to produce such base treachery?⁶⁴

The following month, he answered his own question with yet another attack on the 'school of Wilberforce'. "The Thorntons and Wilberforces, together with the funds which those gentlemen have for the purchase of livings to be disposed among the godly, have, doubtless, had their weight with you."⁶⁵

The British Critic, meanwhile, resolutely maintained its support of Miss More. In January, 1802, they reviewed yet another pamphlet by Mr Bere, and concluded that they must still take the part of Miss More, who is

loved and esteemed by numbers of the highest worth, in highest situations. ... Of Mr. Bere we knew nothing, except his first tract issued from the Dens of Jacobinism; that as a controversialist he was bitter; as a writer miserably ambitious.⁶⁶

But The British Critic was feeling the effects of the attacks made on it.

⁶³Ibid., 5 June, 1802. p. 652 ⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 652-657.

⁶⁵Ibid., 31 July, 1802. pp. 119-120.

⁶⁶The British Critic, Jan. 1802. pp. 93-94.

In April, it bewailed the fact that its circulation was dropping because of the false allegation that it "had taken part against the church in this dispute."⁶⁷ By June, its editors had had enough and, pleading that they and the public were "completely tired of this dispute," promised to "be very concise in our future notice of the tracts relating to it."⁶⁸

For the whole of 1802, Miss More was, in her own words, "battered, hacked, scalped and tom-a-hawked."⁶⁹ The allegations made against her grew wilder and contained more bitter invective. Rumours were spread that she had been tried for sedition, that she had been involved in an attempt on the king's life, and that she was in the pay of Pitt.⁷⁰ The climax was reached with the publication of William Shaw's The Life of Hannah More, the most scurrilous attack of the whole campaign. Shaw raised doubts about Hannah More's parentage, discussed at great length and with vivid imagination how she came by her annuity of £200,⁷¹ and lampooned every one of her literary efforts, including the Cheap Repository. Of her ability as a writer, he observed,

She knows her strength lies in casting prose into verse, stealing the works of others, cunningly and secretly wounding, when she cannot stab her opponents, without the least courage to come forward before the public who befriended her, and on which she has so long and so harmfully imposed.⁷²

⁶⁷Ibid., April, 1802. p. 439.

⁶⁸Ibid., June, 1802. p. 663

⁶⁹Hannah More to a friend, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 82.

⁷⁰Hannah More to Sir. W. W. Pepys, 1808, Ibid., p. 146.

⁷¹Supra., Chapter III. p. 45-46.

⁷²Rev. Sir Archibald MacSarcasm, (William Shaw), The Life of Hannah More, with a Critical Review of Her Writings, T. Hurst, London, 1802. pp. 44-45.

Her refusal to publicly answer the attacks made on her infuriated Shaw.

"In God's name," he wrote, "who is H. More, who arrogates so much, takes the liberty to insult, to injure, and retires into her room, and dares not or cannot vindicate her conduct."⁷³

Even the Anti-Jacobin could not condone such a book, although they took sixteen pages discussing the unpleasant insinuations made about Hannah More before they condemned it as worthless.⁷⁴ In fact, the opponents of Miss More had already over-stepped the mark. By attempting to blacken her character, they had not only shifted attention from the real issues involved at Blagdon, but had swung public opinion firmly behind Miss More. The support that Mr. Bere and his faction received from Shaw and other 'liberals' was disastrous for their cause. Nothing could be calculated to lose support among friends of the Establishment more quickly than a denunciation of Miss More's Cheap Repository.⁷⁵ To argue, as Shaw did, that Miss More's tracts had served only to stir up hatred of the French and to bolster up a tottering government,⁷⁶ was to put himself and all the supporters of Mr. Bere beyond the pale of reputable and patriotic Englishmen. The Anti-Jacobin kept up its attacks on the Evangelical party in general, but it softened its tone toward Miss More.

In December, 1803, the Anti-Jacobin published a description of the

⁷³Ibid., p. 201.

⁷⁴The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 12, June, 1802. pp. 428-444.

⁷⁵Infra., Chapter VI. p. 153

⁷⁶MacSarcasm, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

sisters' anniversary meeting of Shipham schools, and commented very favorably on it.⁷⁷ Hannah More noted this change in attitude and commented to Wilberforce on it.

It is from no kindness to me that the Anti-Jacobin has changed its note; but they are frightened for themselves, now the world has found out what are the real principles, religious and political, of the party they have so zealously espoused: but even jacobins and infidels are to be upheld, if by doing so, Methodism, (or what they call so) may be crushed. Peace be with them! Their repentance comes too late to do me any good.⁷⁸

In late 1801, however, Mr. Bere's triumph was so complete that Miss More herself began to believe that her whole operation was in jeopardy. Fortunately for her, in April, 1802, Bishop Moss died and was succeeded by Bishop Beadon, young, active and an ardent admirer of Hannah More. She immediately wrote him a long letter,⁷⁹ in which she explained her position and asked him what should be done about her schools. It was a masterful piece of writing, and Miss More used all the weapons at her disposal. She put herself in the role of an injured and helpless female appealing to a gentleman and a scholar for assistance and advice. She admitted that she had, perhaps, made some mistakes. She reviewed all the charges made against her and either refuted them or appealed to his lordship to judge for himself their accuracy. She described in detail the operation of her schools and the success they had achieved in bringing

⁷⁷The Anti-Jacobin Review, December, 1803. pp. 531-532.

⁷⁸Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1802, Roberts, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 121.

⁷⁹Miss More's letter to Bishop Beadon is, perhaps, the key document in the Controversy. It is given in full in the Appendices, infra. Appendix E, pp. 233-243.

Christianity to the local villages. It was a letter to which there could be no reply but that given by Dr. Beadon.

He apologised that Miss More should have felt it necessary to vindicate herself or her schools, and went on to reassure her,

I want no declaration or evidence of either your faith or your patriotism, more than what may be derived from your numerous and avowed publications; and I can only say, that if you are not a sincere and zealous friend to the constitutional establishment both in Church and State, you are one of the greatest hypocrites, as well as one of the best writers, in his Majesty's dominions.⁸⁰

He assured her of his best wishes for the further success of her Sunday schools and promised his protection and encouragement.⁸¹

However, Dr. Beadon, like the Mosses before him, could not find sufficient grounds for dismissing Bere. The curate of Blagdon remained and, when Hannah refused to re-open her school, began one of his own. Miss More had retained her influence and her good name, but in Blagdon Mr. Bere was the final victor.

Unfortunately, due to the careful "weeding out" of Wilberforce's correspondence by his two sons when preparing their Life and Correspondence of Wilberforce, there is no information extant relating to his full role in the Blagdon Controversy. Throughout the dispute, he urged Miss More and her friends not to stir up a hornet's nest by letting themselves be drawn into a war of pamphlets. In July, 1801, he advised her that

if any answer be vouchsafed to Bere's rejoinder, let it be very short. I have not read his last, and I am persuaded few will if not drawn into notice by 'the opposition of your friends'.⁸²

⁸⁰Bishop Beadon to Hannah More, 1801. Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 73.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Wilberforce to Hannah More, July 18, 1801, Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce, The Correspondence of William Wilberforce, J. Murray, London, 1840. Vol. I. pp. 227-228.

Later in the same year, he assured her of Bishop Porteus' continued support and urged her to maintain her schools "through evil report and good report."⁸³ He certainly kept himself well informed about the course of the battle, and it seems likely that he played an important part in causing the Mosses to 'about-face'. It may well be that he also brought pressure to bear on Gifford, the editor of the Anti-Jacobin, whose attacks on Bishop Porteus suddenly and surprisingly ceased.

It is typical of an Evangelical that Hannah More, looking back on the Blagdon Controversy, could see some good in it. In 1808, in a letter to her friend, Sir William Pepys, she wrote,

I can now look back, not only without emotion, to this attack, but it has been even matter of thankfulness to me; it helped to break my too strong attachment to the world, it showed me the vanity of human applause, and has led me, I hope, to be more anxious about the motives of my actions, and less anxious about their consequences.⁸⁴

In his Preface to the Life of Hannah More, William Shaw wrote of the Blagdon Controversy,

In this atrabilarious contest, the blood that has been shed is of the blackest kind, and indicates great rancour, melancholy, spleen, malice, hatred, and revenge, with a total absence of the milk of human kindness, love, forgiveness, charity, and a mutual desire for peace.⁸⁵

It was one of the few correct statements in the book. Unfortunately, this 'rancour, melancholy, spleen, malice, hatred and revenge' served to obscure the real issues involved in the Blagdon Controversy. Cer-

⁸³Wilberforce to Hannah More, Dec. 17, 1801, Ibid., p. 236.

⁸⁴Hannah More to Sir W. W. Pepys, July 30, 1808, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 146.

⁸⁵MacSarcasm, op. cit., pp. iii-iv.

tainly, personal animosity and a refusal to compromise were the immediate causes. But the roots and significance of the Controversy lay deeper.

It raised the ever-recurring question of whether the poor should be given a formal education and, if so, how much and of what kind. More important, at a time when private Sunday schools were being established all over the country, it focused attention on the problem of ultimate control. After the Blagdon Controversy, there were few people who would dare to suggest that parish Sunday schools should not be under the complete direction of the local clergyman.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Controversy was in bringing to light the conflict between the Evangelical party and the Orthodox element of the Church. The Blagdon dispute was the first real test of strength of both parties, and it seems likely that the Anti-Jacobin, and even The British Critic, were surprised at the strength and influence of the 'school of Wilberforce'. When a layman wrote, in one of the pamphlets on the Controversy, "We feel the cause of Mr. Bere to be the cause of the clergy in general,"⁸⁶ he was expressing the fears of Orthodox clergy and laymen all over the country. If this new sect had acquired sufficient influence among the higher clergy to secure the dismissal of a curate from his living, the Church was in real danger. In another pamphlet, a layman signing himself A.J. pointed out, not unjustly, that Miss More could, "with all the purest and most upright intentions, establish an

⁸⁶The Anti-Jacobin Review, Vol. 9. September, 1801. p. 393

'imperium in imperio' in our church system".⁸⁷ And this was true of the the Evangelical party in general.

And what if this powerful new sect were actually Methodists! Surely, a Methodist in the Church was a more subversive element than one outside the Establishment! Much of the confusion that prevailed about whether Hannah More in particular, and the Evangelicals in general, were Methodists arose from the contemporary refusal or inability to distinguish between Methodism and Evangelicalism. As Jones points out,

The clear-cut distinction between Methodist and Evangelical accepted in later times was not then in common use, as contemporary writing testifies. To some publicists, Sydney Smith among them, there was no difference: a Methodist was an enthusiast outside the Church, an Evangelical an enthusiast within the Church.⁸⁸

Certainly, Hannah More had not helped make the distinction any clearer. She had employed Methodists in her schools. She had encouraged communal singing, a marked feature of the Methodist service, and the reading of sermons written by Non-conformists. She had allowed her teachers to indulge in extempore prayer, exhort their students to lead blameless lives, and threaten them with eternal punishment if they failed to do so. All this smacked of Methodist practices, if not Methodism itself.

The Blagdon Controversy had brought into the light and focussed attention on issues which were to reappear periodically throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Equally important, the Evangelical party had been thrust onto the centre of the stage. After 1802,

⁸⁷The British Critic, Vol. 18, October, 1801. p. 439.

⁸⁸Jones, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

whatever the Evangelical commanders and their lieutenants attempted would be subjected to the harsh spotlight of publicity and would arouse further controversy.⁸⁹

⁸⁹For example, the great Evangelical venture in establishing the British and Foreign Bible Society was shortly to become the subject of an equally bitter controversy. See Brown, op. cit., pp. 234-284.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRACTS

In 1784, when Hannah More retired to her cottage at Cowslip Green, she was sincerely seeking an escape from the pressures and temptations of polite society, and a retreat where she could work out her own relationship with God, undistracted by worldly concerns. Unfortunately, the cottage was habitable only in the summer months, and Hannah was forced to spend her winters with her sisters at Bath or with friends in London. In these two celebrated centres of fashionable society, with much soul-searching, many misgivings and considerable enjoyment, she found herself accepting the inevitable invitations to the large assemblies of the great. If anything, between 1784 and 1789, her circle of influential friends expanded rather than contracted, and she never succeeded in divorcing herself from the society of which she was so critical.

When, in 1789, she began the 'Mendip Operation', even her summers were taken up with activities which gave her little time for the peace and quiet she was always professing to seek. Three years later, in 1792, she found herself engaged in a new enterprise, one which was to prove as exhausting and time-consuming as the 'Mendip Operation' itself.

Thomas Paine had published his Rights of Man in 1791 and, within a few months, it was threatening to undo completely the good work accomplished by Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France. It was one thing to talk abstractly of the rights of man, the corruption of monarchical and aristocratic institutions of government, and the need of a further revolution to complete the work begun in 1688; but to preach such doctrines forthrightly, in down-to-earth language, and to encourage the

circulation of such sedition among the lower orders was another matter, something requiring retaliatory action.

The efforts of the government to prevent the circulation of Paine's work met with little success. When the book appeared in a cheap edition,

copies were thrust into the hands of all sorts and conditions of persons in the public streets, they were quietly and unobtrusively introduced into cottage homes, were picked up on the public roads, and were found 'lurking at the bottom of mines and coal pits'. Even the children's sweetmeats were wrapt up in its pages.¹

Some antidote to this poison, which was spreading rapidly throughout the whole body of the lower orders, was urgently needed. The Bishop of London, Beilby Porteus, approached Hannah More. She later explained, in a letter to a friend,

As soon as I came to Bath, our dear Bishop of London came to me with a dismal countenance, and told me that I should repent it on my deathbed, if I, who knew so much of the habits and sentiments of the lower order of people, did not write some little thing tending to open their eyes under their present wild impressions of liberty and equality. It must be something level to their apprehensions, or it would be of no use.²

At first, Miss More refused, pleading that she had little time and less talent for writing pamphlets in what would have to be 'vulgar' language and that politicking was not 'woman's work'. But her hatred of Paine's writings, her love of the established order and her desire to please so eminent a person as the Bishop of London soon changed her mind. As she herself put it,

¹M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952. p. 133.

²Hannah More to Mrs. Boscawen, 1793. William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I. p. 525.

In an evil hour, against my will and my judgement, on one sick day, I scribbled a little pamphlet called Village Politics, by Will Chip; and the very next morning after I had first conceived the idea, I sent it off to Rivington, changing my bookseller, in order the more surely to escape detection. It is as vulgar as the heart can wish; but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered; as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my nature; though indeed it is rather a question of peace than of politics.³

Miss More's concealment of herself as the author of a pamphlet written in such vulgar and un-Johnsonian language did not last long. The reception that the pamphlet was given by the upper orders made her only too pleased to admit her authorship. Roberts glowingly reported,

Innumerable were the thanks and congratulations, which bore cordial testimony to the merit of a performance, by which the tact and intelligence of a single female had 'wielded at will the fierce democratic of England', and stemmed the tide of misguided opinion.⁴

Village Politics is addressed to "all the mechanics, journeymen, and labourers in Great Britain" by Will Chip, a country carpenter.⁵ It is written in the form of a dialogue between Jack Anvil, a God-fearing and patriotic blacksmith, and Tom Hood, a mason who has been infected with the revolutionary ideas of Paine and is out for reform at any cost. After reading Rights of Man, Tom has discovered that he is "very unhappy and very miserable," and tries to communicate his dissatisfaction to his friend, Jack.

Tom. I'm a friend to the people. I want a reform.

Jack. Then the shortest way is to mend thyself.

Tom. But I want a general reform.

Jack. Then let everyone mend one.

Tom. Pooh! I want freedom and happiness, the same as they have got in France.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 524.

⁵Hannah More, Village Politics: by Will Chip, Works, D. Graisberry, London, 1803, Vol. I. p. 205.

Jack. What, Tom, we imitate them? We follow the French! Why they only began all this mischief at first in order to be just what we are already; and what a blessed land must this be, to be in actual possession of all they ever hoped to gain by all their hurly-burly. Imitate them indeed! - Why I'd sooner go to the Negroes to get learning, or to the Turks to get religion, than to the French for freedom and happiness.

Tom. What do you mean by that? ar'n't the French free?

Jack. Free, Tom! aye, free with a witness. They are all so free that there's nobody safe. They make free to rob whom they will, and kill whom they will. If they don't like a man's looks, they make free to hang him without judge or jury, and the next lamp-post serves for the gallows; so then they call themselves free, because you see they have no law left to condemn them, and no King to take them up and hang them for it.⁶

Each of Tom's arguments is rapidly demolished by Jack's devastating mixture of prejudice and common-sense, and, slowly but surely, the essential body of Burke's political philosophy is reconstructed. The constitution is likened to Sir John's old castle and, while his "fantastical wife" would like to pull it down and build it up again "in her frippery way," Sir John realises that the building has such strong foundations that all it requires is a little patching here and there. The constitution, like the castle, wants "no pull-me-down works", but merely an occasional mending.⁷

When Tom insists that he will never again work hard so that others can ride in coaches and do nothing, Jack uses the analogy between society and the human body to show him his error. The refusal of the hands and feet to do any work may well "pinch the belly," but eventually the limbs themselves will fall "sick and pine away," unless they come to their senses and perform their proper function.⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 208.

⁷Ibid., pp. 210-211.

⁸Ibid., pp. 211-212.

At last Tom admits that his arguments are ill-conceived and indefensible, and he seeks enlightenment from Jack. It is readily forthcoming.

Tom. What then dost thou take French liberty to be?

Jack. To murder more men in one night, than ever their poor king did in his whole life.

Tom. And what dost thou take a Democrat to be?

Jack. One who likes to be governed by a thousand tyrants, and yet can't bear a king.

Tom. What is equality?

Jack. For every man to pull down every one that is above him; while, instead of raising those below him, to his own level, he only makes use of them as steps to raise himself to the place of those he has tumbled down.

Tom. What is the new Rights of Man?

Jack. Battle, murder, and sudden death.

Tom. What is to be an enlightened people?

Jack. To put out the light of the gospel, confound right and wrong, and grope about in pitch darkness.

Tom. What is Philosophy, that Tim Standish talks so much about?

Jack. To believe that there's neither God, nor devil, nor heaven nor hell: to dig up a wicked old fellow's* rotten bones, whose books, Sir John says, have been the ruin of thousands; and to set his figure up in a church and worship him.

Tom. And what is a Patriot according to the new school?

Jack. A man who loves every other country better than his own, and France best of all.

Tom. And what is benevolence?

Jack. Why, in the new fangled language, it means contempt of religion, aversion to justice, overturning of law, doating on all mankind in general, and hating everybody in particular.⁹

* Voltaire.

For such eminently suitable literature for the lower orders, ready funds were available for printing and distribution, and hundreds of thousands of copies of the pamphlet were circulated among the poor in England. Although the number of Village Politics printed was far in excess of those of Rights of Man, there is no way of comparing the circulation of the two or

⁹Ibid., p. 219.

of accurately assessing their relative influence. Later, Village Politics was to be translated into French and Italian and distributed on the continent. It was read by virtually all of the upper orders for, as Hopkins acutely observes, "Whether or not Chip quieted the restive folk, he certainly gave comfort to the upper classes."¹⁰ Hannah More's excursion into the field of pamphleteering and tract writing had met with unqualified success, and, more important, given her the confidence to persist with this form of literature.

Within a year, she had begun work on an ambitious scheme to provide a continuous supply of suitable literature for the middle and lower orders. No one was more aware than Hannah More of the potential dangers of the rapid increase in literacy among the lower orders which had occurred in the last years of the eighteenth century. The writers of cheap romantic novels of deplorable taste and the 'new and dangerous school of Paine' were making full use of the increased literacy of the poor. What was required was a form of cheap literature, adapted to the reading level of the poor, which would contain safe and even elevating material. As Hannah More later observed,

. . . as an appetite for reading had, from a variety of causes, been increasing among the inferior ranks in this country, it was judged expedient, at this critical period, to supply such wholesome aliment as might give a new direction to their taste, and abate their relish for those corrupt and inflammatory publications which the consequences of the French Revolution have been so fatally pouring in on us.¹¹

¹⁰M. A. Hopkins, Hannah More and Her Circle, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1947. p. 208.

¹¹Hannah More, Advertisement to 'Tales for the Common People', Works, Vol. II. p. viii.

Hannah More's friend, Sarah Trimmer, had already made an effort to supply the poor with suitable reading matter, and two issues of her magazine had been published. But its title, The Family Magazine, or Repository of religious instruction and rational amusement designed to counteract the pernicious tendency of immoral books which have circulated of late years among the poorer classes of people to the obstruction of their improvement in religion and morals, was hardly one which would attract the barely literate. It was of far too elevated a tone and, more important, at three shillings a copy, far too expensive to attract the poor.¹²

Hannah More decided to 'meet fire with fire.' She would not only imitate the form and style of the "pernicious trash" that was so popular with the poor but would undersell it. Three tracts, in the form of stories or ballads, would be produced each month. They were to be called Cheap Repository Tracts, later contracted to Cheap Repository.

If the tracts were to be sold at less than cost price, substantial subscriptions would be needed. Fortunately, Henry Thornton agreed to be treasurer of the scheme and he quickly ensured that adequate funds would be available. A more difficult problem was to obtain a continuous supply of suitable tracts. Once again, the large number of contacts open to Miss More provided a solution, and eventually she was forced to become highly selective of the material which was submitted to her for inclusion. In 1795, she wrote to her sister,

Mr. Mason has sent me half a dozen ballads for the Repository. I was obliged to reject three, because they had too much of politics, and another because there was too much of love. But two, one of which was

¹²Jones, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

called the 'Ploughboy's Dream', will do very well. I know not what so great a man will say at having any of his offerings rejected. The Bishop has written him word that I am very nice, and hard to please, so that he must not wonder if I do not take every thing even of his.¹³

Eventually, Thornton, Mrs. Trimmer, Newton, John Venn, William Gilpin, Hannah's sister, Sally, Mason, and many others contributed their share of tracts. But the major role in writing the tracts was taken by Hannah herself. Of the 114 tracts published between 1795 and 1798, she contributed at least 50.¹⁴

The whole enterprise was conducted in masterful fashion and was a considerable feat of organization. She had secured funds and guaranteed a supply of suitable material. More important, she had conducted a thorough investigation of all the types of cheap literature available to the poor and made her tracts identical in appearance to the most popular forms of this literature. She wrote many of the stories as serials in order to secure the continued interest of the reader. Nor did she neglect the distribution problem. Highly placed ecclesiastics, including the Bishop of London, Bishop Barrington of Durham and the Archdeacon of Shrewsbury were persuaded to join forces with influential laymen of the calibre of Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Piozzi and Mrs. Montague, to aid in the distribution of the tracts.¹⁵ Distributing committees were set up in all the larger towns. Pedlars and hawkers were contacted, and persuaded (and sometimes bribed) to sell them. Hannah More in a letter to her sister in 1795 related the following

¹³Hannah More to her sisters, 1795. Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 557.

¹⁴For a list of the tracts written by Hannah More, see Appendix I. pp. 255-256.

¹⁵Hannah More to her sisters, 1795. Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 556-559.

anecdote. During a conversation with the Duchess of Gloucester,

the Duchess quoted the 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain' two or three times and told one of a little adventure she had had. She desired Lady Mary Mordaunt (one of her ladies of the bedchamber) to stop an orange-woman and ask her if she ever sold ballads? 'No! Indeed!' said the woman, 'I don't do any thing so mean, I don't even sell apples!' This diverted them as they did not know there were so many ranks and gradations in life. With some difficulty, however, they prevailed on her to condescend to sell some of our little books, and in a few hours she came back showing them two shillings she had cleared by her new trade.¹⁶

The sales of the tracts were, by any standards, enormous. In the first six weeks, over 300,000 were sold. By the end of the first year of operation, two million tracts had been distributed throughout the country. The Cheap Repository had become big business and no longer required subsidies from the rich to ensure their cheapness. The large circulation of the tracts had made them extremely profitable. In fact, the profits offered by the scheme proved to be one of the causes of the collapse of the original plan; not everyone was as concerned with saving souls and reforming society as Hannah More.

In 1798, John Marshall, who had handled the printing of the tracts and been a continual source of irritation to Miss More, was replaced by another printer. Mr. Marshall felt that the tracts were too profitable an enterprise to lose and began his own series under the same name. Unfortunately, his tracts were totally lacking in any sense of decorum, and became almost as pernicious as the literature they were supposed to replace.¹⁷ Hannah More and her friends disassociated themselves from the new tracts and closed down their own enterprise.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 559.

¹⁷Jones, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

It is ~~likely~~, however, that the original plan would have collapsed without the duplicity of Marshall. As the extent of the 'Mendip Operation' grew and the flood of dangerous literature began to dwindle, Hannah More found the task of writing tract after tract more and more exhausting. There is little doubt that she was very relieved to be free of 'The Cheap Repository'. Her diary for September 22, 1798, reads as follows:

Cheap Repository is closed. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' that I have been spared to accomplish that work! Do thou, O Lord, bless and prosper it to the good of many, and if it do good, may I give to thee the glory, and take to myself the shame of its defects. I have devoted three years to this work.¹⁸

The new publishers were given instructions to reprint the old tracts as the need arose, but no new ones were written until 1817. In that year, the depression in trade, industry and agriculture had produced all the usual threats to public order, strikes, riots and a great deal of seditious literature. Miss More dutifully revived her Cheap Repository and produced several new ballads.¹⁹ The revival was short-lived however, and as soon as the threat to public order had ceased, Miss More stopped writing tracts and resumed her life as an invalid and occasional writer of devotional works.

The tracts were divided into two groups, one designed for the lower orders and the other for the middle ranks of society. Those written by Miss More demonstrate the knowledge and experience she had acquired in her Mendip Operation. Indeed, her friends were sometimes shocked at the facts she had discovered about the poor, considering such knowledge

¹⁸Cited in Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. p. 28.

¹⁹Hannah More to Miss Roberts, 1817, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. II. pp. 225-226.

unsuitable for a lady of Miss More's position.

The tracts are completely lacking in subtlety, which, in view of the nature of her reading public, would have been quite out of place. Brown describes her style of writing as "simple, vigorous and even racy, with a kind of humour and pungency and what may be called a moral dramatic quality."²⁰

Her Tales for the Common People were, perhaps, her greatest achievement.²¹ In them she set forth her doctrines for the poor. First, the lower orders must realize that 'whatever is, is right.' There must be no attempt made to alter the arrangements decreed by Divine Providence. Thus, in her ballad, Turn the Carpet, or The Two Weavers, Dick, a weaver, complains,

Where'er I look, howe'er I range,
'Tis all confused, and hard, and strange;
The good are troubled and oppress'd,
And all the wicked are the bless'd.²²

His friend John is fortunately able to set Dick right, and, pointing out to him his half-finished carpet which is upside down, observes,

As when we view these shreds and ends,
We know not what the whole intends;
So when on earth things look but odd,
They're working still some scheme of God.

No plan, no pattern, can we trace,
All wants proportion, truth, and grace;
The motley mixture we deride,
Nor see the beauteous upper side.

²⁰Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1961. p. 135.

²¹This was the title given to those tracts written by Miss More and designed particularly for the lower orders. They were later collected into a separate volume and published together.

²²Hannah More, Turn the Carpet, or The Two Weavers, Works, Vol. I. p. 182.

But when we reach that world of light,
And view those works of God aright,
Then shall we see the whole design.
And own the workman is divine.²³

Bishop Porteus was not speaking entirely in jest when he remarked of the ballad, "Here you have Bishop Butler's Analogy, all for a half-penny."²⁴

Not surprisingly, the tracts that set forth this particular doctrine were the least popular among her readers; they are certainly the least convincing.²⁵ Perhaps this is due to a certain ambivalence in Miss More's view of the place of the lower orders in society. While on the one hand, and in some tracts, she preached contentment and calm submission to one's lot in life, on the other hand, and in other tracts, she demonstrated to the poor that it was in this life, as well as the next, that the virtuous were rewarded and the guilty punished. It is true that she pointed out to the poor that, although "success is the common reward of industry. . . . God is sometimes pleased, for wise ends, to disappoint all the worldly hopes of the most upright man."²⁶ But in the vast majority of her tracts, she showed most convincingly that nothing but disaster, temporal and eternal, will befall the irreligious and malcontent, while those who are honest citizens, industrious workers and good Christians will inevitably prosper and rise in the world. It is in this group of tracts, when preaching a system of temporal rewards and punishments, that Miss More is at her best

²³Ibid., p. 183.

²⁴Hannah More to her sister, 1795, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 558.

²⁵This is particularly true of her tract 'Tis All for the Best, which is almost superstitiously fatalistic in tone and entirely lacking in verisimilitude. Hannah More, 'Tis All for the Best, Works, Vol. II. pp. 398-418.

²⁶Hannah More, Tom White the Postboy, Part II, Works, Vol. III. p. 135.

and most convincing.

In The Two Shoemakers, which ran to six episodes, we are introduced to Jack Brown and James Stock, two young boys apprenticed to a shoemaker. Jack, an idle and wild fellow, is a perfect contrast to James, "a modest, industrious, pious youth," of humble background.²⁷ Unable to resist partaking in any diversion from work and cursed with an ample supply of pocket money, Jack spends more and more time with his master at the ale-house. Even the death of his master, who expires of a stroke amid "the tankards, punch-bowls, glasses, pipes, and dirty greasy packs of cards,"²⁸ and his death-bed warning to his wayward apprentice fail to make a lasting impression on the foolish youth.

"O wretched boy!" said he, "I fear I shall have the ruin of thy soul, as well as my own, to answer for. Stop short! - Take warning - now, in the days of thy youth. . . . Death is dreadful to the wicked - O the sting of death to a guilty conscience!" Here he lifted up his ghastly eyes in speechless horror, grasped hard the hand of James, gave a deep hollow groan, and closed his eyes never to open them but in an awful eternity.

This was death in all its horrors! The gay company of his sinful pleasures could not stand the sight; all slunk away like guilty thieves from their late favourite friend. . . . Brown was not so hardened but that he shed many tears for his unhappy master; and even some hasty resolutions of amendment, which were soon forgotten.²⁹

The honest, pious and industrious James rents his dead master's shop and is soon a prosperous business man. Meanwhile, Jack, in spite of being set up in his own shop by his parents, goes bankrupt and is imprisoned for debt. When the upright Mr. Stock goes to visit him, he finds "poor miserable Jack Brown lying on his wretched bed, his face so

²⁷Hannah More, The Two Shoemakers, Ibid. p. 41.

²⁸Ibid., p. 51.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 52-53.

changed by pain, poverty, dirt, and sorrow, that he could hardly be known for that merry soul of jack-boot, as he used to be proud to hear himself called."³⁰

At length, having endured all the agonies of body that prison life has to offer and the worse agonies of mind that the guilty must bear, Jack recognises his need of salvation. His debts are then paid by the worthy Mr. Stock and, at his own request, he is removed to the local poorhouse where, crippled by disease, he will spend the remainder of his life regretting the folly of his youth.

In Black Giles the Poacher: containing some Account of a Family who had rather live by their Wits than their Work, Miss More was writing almost entirely from first-hand knowledge. Black Giles, a surly, lazy ne'er-do-well, lives with his family in a tumbled-down cottage on a Somerset moor. His children have been brought up to earn their livings by begging and thieving. Only young Dick has any shred of decency in him and fortunately he is bribed by the local vicar, Mr. Wilson, to attend the village Sunday school. It is not long before Dick realises the error of his ways and confesses his (and his father's) crimes to the whole school. Mr. Wilson, who is also the local magistrate, is contemplating what punishment to mete out to the villainous Giles when he is summoned to attend a dying man. It is, of course, Black Giles himself, who has been crushed by a wall that fell on him when he attempted to scale it and rob an orchard. As usual, his death is suitably instructive.

³⁰Ibid., p. 91.

The poor wretch could neither pray himself nor attend to the minister. He could only cry out, "Oh! sir, what will become of me? I don't know how to repent. O my poor wicked children! Sir, I have bred them all up in sin and ignorance. Have mercy on them, sir; let me not meet them in the place of torment to which I am going . . . He languished a few days, and died in great misery: - a fresh and sad instance that people who abuse the grace of God and reject his spirit, find it difficult to repent when they will."³¹

It is, of course, impossible to do justice to any of the tracts by merely summarising the plot. Indeed, the main interest of a story like Black Giles the Poacher lies in its accurate observation and portrayal of the life of the country poor. The story, which ran to several episodes, is full of sound advice and warnings to both rich and poor. The poor are warned that the most beggarly-looking families will usually receive the least charity from the rich, who tend to look on them as professional beggars. They are advised to be on guard against pedlars and fortune-tellers like Black Giles' wife, who concocts worthless cordials in her filthy cottage and sells them to gullible country people. In one episode, Mr. Wilson demonstrates to his class of Sunday school children that a boy who robs an orchard has broken every one of the ten commandments. The rich are warned not to encourage families to depend on begging by giving money to professional beggars, and are given a great deal of information about the methods used by the unscrupulous poor to cheat and rob them. To the poor, the tracts described a world with which they were perfectly familiar, and this gave the tracts added authority. For many of the rich, they were a revelation of a way of life they had never dreamed existed.

The justness of the punishment dealt out by the awful hand of

³¹Hannah More, Black Giles the Poacher, Works, Vol. III. pp. 247-248.

Providence and earned by the evil is most forcefully illustrated in the ballads of Miss More. Robert and Richard; or The Ghost of Poor Molly who was drowned in Richard's Mill Pond is typical. Richard, a gay dissolute young man, courts Molly and gets her with child. He refuses to marry the unfortunate girl and deserts her and his child. Soon after, Molly and her baby are found drowned in Richard's mill-pond. Ignoring all advice, Richard continues his dissolute mode of living. Soon, however, his dreams are haunted by the ghost of Molly and the awful process of retribution begins.

Now disturb'd in his dreams, poor Molly each night
With her babe stood before him, how sad was the sight:
O how ghastly she looked as she bade him attend,
And so awfully told, "Remember the end."

She talk'd of the woes and unquenchable fire
Which await the licentious, the drunkard, and liar:
How he ruin'd more maidens, she bade him beware,
Then she wept, and she groan'd, and she vanish'd in air.

Now beggar'd by gaming, distemper'd by drink,
Death star'd in his face, yet he dar'd not to think;
Despairing of mercy, despising all truth,
He dy'd of old age in the prime of his youth.³²

But even in this moral tale, Providence does not 'step in' and interfere with the normal course of events. Richard's miserable end is the result of his way of life, and is as inevitable as the worldly success of the virtuous and industrious James Stock. It is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that the unhappy circumstances of the poor are due, not so much to the design of Divine Providence, as to their failure to lead good lives.

³²Hannah More, Robert and Richard; or The Ghost of Poor Molly, Ibid., Vol. I. p. 154.

While Miss More certainly believed that the poor were meant to remain the social inferiors of the rich, she was equally convinced that Providence did not mean them to be stricken with poverty. Thus, several of the tracts devoted themselves almost exclusively to advising the poor how to improve their material comforts and showing them that many of their hardships arose from their own lack of knowledge, industry and thrift. In Betty Brown, the St. Gile's Orange Girl,³³ the heroine is an industrious young girl, who is desperately trying to improve her lot in life. However, she falls into the clutches of the evil Mrs. Sponge, a money-lender, and her hard-earned money is taken up in paying exorbitant interest rates on her small debt. Only when a kind lady of the upper orders shows her how badly she is being cheated, does she free herself from Mrs. Sponge and begin to prosper. The tract concludes with a long list of 'Rules for Retail Trades,' designed to ensure the prosperity of all those who faithfully observe them. They begin,

Resist every temptation to cheat.
Never impose bad goods on false pretences.
Never put off bad money for good.
Never use prophane or uncivil language.³⁴

Again, the implication is that those who work hard and are honest will prosper.

The second episode of Tom White the Postboy is subtitled The Way to Plenty,³⁵ and is devoted entirely to showing the poor that their hardships arise largely from their own lack of economy. Mr. White, who, by virtue of his piety and industry, has risen from poor postboy to prosperous farmer, convinces his laborers to avoid getting drunk at lunchtime and thus losing

³³Hannah More, Betty Brown, The St. Gile's Orange Girl, Ibid., Vol. III. pp. 207 ff.

³⁴Ibid., p. 219.

³⁵Supra., Chapter IV. p. 89.

an afternoon's wages. He shows them that they can save money by brewing their own ale and eating and drinking at home rather than the local ale-house. During the hard winter of 1795, he gets rid of his pet dogs, which consume meat and milk that are needed for his family, and persuades others to do the same. At a parish meeting, Mrs. White is prevailed upon to give several cheap but nourishing recipes to the local wives, who are still foolishly indulging themselves and their families with expensive white bread and more expensive tea. Hannah More and her sister had given the same advice to the Mendip villagers.³⁶

The most frequently repeated advice given to the poor was that they could never hope to improve their material comforts by indulging in any form of violence or insubordination against the laws of the land. Organising strikes against employers only made things harder for the families of the strikers. Burning down mills caused bread to be more expensive. Rioters and strikers deserved to be punished to the full extent of the law. They were friends neither to the poor nor to themselves. In Hannah More's classic ballad, The Riot, or Half a Loaf is better than no Bread, which was credited with preventing a dangerous riot in Bath in 1793,³⁷ honest Jack Anvil points out,

What a whimsey to think thus our bellies to fill,
For we stop all the grinding by breaking the mill!
What a whimsey to think we shall get more to eat
By abusing the butchers who get us the meat!
What a whimsey to think we shall mend our spare diet
By breeding disturbance, by murder and riot!

³⁶Supra. Chapter IV, p. 89.

³⁷Hannah More to Mrs. Boscawen, 1793, Roberts, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 535.

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And tho' I've no money, and tho' I've no lands,
I've 'a head on my shoulders, and a pair of good hands,
So I'll work the whole day, and on Sundays I'll seek,
At church how to bear all the wants of the week.
The gentlefolks too will afford us supplies,
They'll subscribe - and they'll give up their puddings and pies.

Then before I'm induced to take part in a Riot,
I'll ask this short question - What shall I get by it?
So I'll e'en wait a little till cheaper the bread,
For a mittimus hangs o'er each Rioter's head:
And when of two evils I'm ask'd which is best,
I'd rather be hungry than hang'd, I protest.³⁸

By hard work and by making themselves suitable objects of charity, the poor would receive adequate sustenance in times of difficulty; but for the malcontent there would be no work and no charity. As the worthy Doctor Shepherd, in The Way to Plenty, points out to the parish meeting,

But there is one rule from which we will never depart. Those who have been seen aiding, or abetting any riot, any attack on butchers, bakers, wheat-mows, mills, or millers, we will not relieve; but with the quiet, contented, hard-working man, I will share my last morsel of bread.³⁹

No account of the tracts for the lower orders would be complete without an examination of Miss More's The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain. Brown, exaggerating only slightly, considers it "a flawless masterpiece perfect in conception and in execution, likely to remain forever peerless on a height the moral tale will not reach again."⁴⁰

The character of the shepherd was taken from a living model, a certain David Saunders, who was discovered by a curate of Sir James

³⁸Hannah More, The Riot or Half a Loaf is Better than No Bread, Works, Vol. I. pp. 160-163.

³⁹Hannah More, The Way to Plenty, Ibid., Vol. III. p. 155.

⁴⁰Brown, op. cit., p. 144

Stonehouse, one of Hannah More's closest friends. Mr. Johnson, the other principal character in the story, and reputedly based on the character of Sir James Stonehouse himself, is "a very worthy charitable gentleman." While journeying across the Wiltshire moors, he meets a shepherd and condescends to converse with him.

"Yours is a troublesome life, honest friend," said he. -
 "To be sure, sir," replied the shepherd, "'tis not a very lazy life; but 'tis not near so toilsome as that which my GREAT MASTER led for my sake; and he had every state and condition of life at his choice, and chose a hard one; while I only submit to the lot that is appointed me." - "You are exposed to great cold and heat," said the gentleman; - "true, sir," said the shepherd; "but then I am not exposed to great temptations; and so throwing one thing against another, God is pleased to contrive to make things more equal than we poor, ignorant, short-sighted creatures, are apt to think.... I wonder all working men do not derive as great joy and delight as I do from thinking how God has honoured poverty! Oh! sir, what great, or rich, or mighty men have had such honour put on them, or their condition, as shepherds, tent-makers, fishermen, and carpenters have had?"⁴¹

Mr. Johnson is, of course, extremely impressed with his new-found acquaintance. During their lengthy conversation he discovers that the shepherd lives in a damp and cold cottage, that his wife is constantly beset by sickness, and that he has three children to provide for. In spite of these hardships, the shepherd is content. Though his wife is unable to work out of doors, he has wisely bred up his children to habits of industry, and they help to provide funds for food by knitting, keeping birds off the corn, picking stones from the fields, and collecting wool rubbed off by the sheep on bushes.

⁴¹Hannah More, The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, Works, Vol. III. pp. 4-5.

Mr. Johnson lifted up his eyes in silent astonishment at the shifts which honest poverty can make rather than beg or steal; and was surprised to think how many ways of subsisting there are, which those who live at their ease little suspect.⁴²

He resolves to visit this unique family and, on his return from Salisbury, calls upon the shepherd. It is a Sunday and the family are at their mid-day meal. Having eaten their frugal dinner of potatoes, for which the whole family is obviously grateful, they all make their way to church. After the service, the shepherd catechises his children and the observant Mr. Johnson is struck by the shepherd's great knowledge of the Scriptures.

At this point, the inevitable rewards, which Providence bestows on the industrious and righteous, begin to shower down on the shepherd and his family. The village curate arrives with the news that old Wilson, his parish clerk, has just died and that he has appointed the honest shepherd to his place. To these 'joyous tidings' Mr. Johnson adds others. He has decided to establish a Sunday school in the village and will appoint the shepherd to be master and his wife mistress. The whole family is to be moved into the deceased clerk's house, which is warm and dry. The shepherd is, not surprisingly, in transports of delight.

"How can I ever be thankful enough for such blessings; And will my poor Mary have a dry thatch over her head? and shall I be able to send for the doctor when I am like to lose her? Indeed my cup runs over with blessings, I hope God will give me humility." Here he and Mary looked at each other and burst into tears. The gentlemen saw their distress, and kindly walked out upon the little green before the door, that these honest people might give vent to their feelings. As soon as they were

⁴²Ibid., p. 11.

alone they crept into one corner of the room, where they thought they could not be seen, and fell on their knees, devoutly blessing and praising God for his mercies.⁴³

For all the conservative elements in society, and particularly for the Evangelical, the shepherd became an idealised conception of the English country laborer.

There is a story of William Jay, the noted non-conformist divine of Bath, weeping as he read Mrs. More's tale of the honest shepherd, and years later William Wilberforce declared that he would rather go up to render his account at the last day carrying with him The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain than with all the volumes of Sir Walter Scott's works, 'full as they are of genius'.⁴⁴

Of the tracts written by Miss More for "persons of the middle ranks", there are three that will be examined in some detail. In The History of Mr. Fantom, The New Fashioned Philosopher, and His Man Williams, she warned her readers of the disasters that were likely to befall them and their servants if they allowed themselves to be infected with the 'new philosophy of Paine'.

Mr. Fantom is a shallow man whose mind is "a prey to vain imaginations."⁴⁵ Unfortunately, he obtains a copy of that "famous little book written by the NEW PHILOSOPHER, whose pestilent doctrines have gone about seeking whom they may destroy."⁴⁶

He soon got all the cant of the new school. He prated about narrowness, and ignorance, and bigotry, and prejudice, and priestcraft, on the one hand; and on the other, public good, the love of mankind, and liberality, and candour, and toleration, and above all benevolence. . . . By benevolence he understood a gloomy and indefinite anxiety about the happiness of people with whom he was

⁴³Ibid., p. 36

⁴⁴Brown, op. cit., p. 151.

⁴⁵Hannah More, The History of Mr. Fantom, The New Fashioned Philosopher and His Man Williams, Works, Vol. II. p. 246.

⁴⁶Ibid.

utterly disconnected, and whom Providence had put it out of his reach either to serve or injure. And by the happiness this benevolence was so anxious to promote, he meant an exemption from the power of the laws, and an emancipation from the restraints of religion, conscience, and moral obligation.⁴⁷

Thus, while Mr. Fantom talks continually of his benevolence to all men, he will not lift a finger to help anyone in particular, not even his unfortunate gardener, whose house burns down. When requested to aid an apprentice who has been ill-used by his master, he replies,

You must not apply to me for the redress of such petty grievances. I own that the wrongs of the Poles and South Americans so fill my mind, as to leave me no time to attend to the petty sorrows of work-houses and parish apprentices. It is provinces, empires, continents, that the benevolence of the philosopher embraces; every one can do a little paltry good to his next neighbour.⁴⁸

Mr. Fantom's views have been imbibed by his servant, Williams, who rapidly forgets his Christian principles. Before long, he becomes a drunkard and eventually absconds with Mr. Fantom's silver spoons. A few weeks later, Mr. Fantom is informed that his servant is in prison, awaiting execution for a brutal murder.

Mr. Fantom's honest and pious friend, Mr. Trueman, persuades him to visit the unfortunate Williams. On seeing his former master, the condemned man cries out,

You are the cause of my being about to suffer a shameful death. Yes, Sir, you made me a drunkard, a thief, and a murderer. . . . From you I learned the principles which lead to those crimes. By the grace of God I should never have fallen into sins deserving of the gallows, if I had not overheard you say there was no hereafter, no judgement, no future reckoning. O, Sir, there is a hell, dreadful, inconceivable, eternal!⁴⁹

Mr. Fantom, considerably discomfitted, departs while the good Mr Trueman remains and gives the wretched Williams what comfort he can.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 247.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 255.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 273.

The condemned man is "turned-off just a quarter before eleven," a victim of the 'new philosophy' and his master's foolishness.

In The Two Wealthy Farmers, which ran to seven episodes, we meet Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy, the former vain, dishonest and very prosperous, the latter honest and pious. In this particular story, Miss More was mainly concerned to demonstrate the disasters that can befall those who, because of their pride in the things of this world, neglect the proper education of their children. Mr. Bragwell and his wife are attempting to improve their own and their daughters' fortunes by contracting 'suitable' marriages for them. To this end, they have given them an education designed to set them above their neighbours and make them 'genteel'. As a result of this improper education,

of knowledge the Miss Bragwells had got just enough to laugh at their fond parents' rustic manners and vulgar language, and just enough taste to despise and ridicule every girl who was not as vainly dressed as themselves.⁵⁰

The daughters, of course, have no knowledge of household economy and no desire to obtain any. They spend "the morning in bed, the noon in dressing, the evening at the harpsichord, and the night in reading novels."⁵¹

Miss More could not resist a passing reference to the great dangers of this last occupation. Indeed, novels and plays are, perhaps, the most effective media for producing discontent with one's station in life.

It is rank - it is elegance - it is beauty - it is sentimental feelings - it is sensibility - it is some needless, or some superficial, or some quality hurtful, even in that fashionable person to whom the author ascribes it, which is the ruling principle.

⁵⁰Hannah More, The Two Wealthy Farmers; or The History of Mr. Bragwell, Ibid. p. 287.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 288-289.

This quality transferred into the heart and the conduct of an illiterate woman in an inferior station becomes impropriety, becomes absurdity, becomes sinfulness.⁵²

While one of the daughters, Betsy, is rejecting an honest and religious suitor because he has not heard of and will not learn the latest dance, a Menuet de la Cour, her sister, Polly, not to be outdone, elopes with a worthless strolling player, who, like many a character in the novels she has read, convinces her that he is really a gentleman in disguise. Mr. and Mrs. Bragwell are distraught, but are reproved by Mr. Worthy, who justly points out,

But, for what better husband was she qualified? For the wife of a Farmer she was too idle: for the wife of a Tradesman she was too expensive: for the wife of a Gentleman she was too ignorant I owe it to you, as a friend, and to myself as a Christian, to declare, that your practices in the common transactions of life, as well as your present misfortune, are almost the natural consequences of those false principles which I protested against when you were at my house.⁵³

Unfortunately, it is too late to reform Betsy and, for her, an even worse fate is awaiting. Overcome by the gaudy clothes and vulgar flattery of Squire Squeeze, she marries this objectionable fellow and goes to London with him. Before long, Squeeze has spent all his own money and a good deal of Mr. Bragwell's. Hounded by creditors, he blows his brains out in front of his pregnant wife. Betsy is overcome with shock and later expires, together with her new born baby.

Meanwhile, Polly, deserted by her husband, destitute and seriously ill, arrives at Mr. Bragwell's house with her young son. Too ignorant to earn a living by her own efforts, she has lived in a poor-house for many months. There she was given a copy of Doddridge's Rise and

⁵²Ibid., p. 290

⁵³Ibid., p. 357.

Progress of Religion in the Soul, which brought her to a vital religious faith. Feeling she was about to die, she has returned to her father.

As disaster after disaster strikes Mr. Bragwell, he naturally becomes more and more tractable to the arguments of Mr. Worthy. Polly's story convinces him. He commits the education of his grandchild to good Mr. Worthy, and begs him,

Teach him to value his immortal soul more, and the good things in this life less, than I have done. Bring him up in the fear of God, and in the government of his passions. Teach him that unbelief and pride are the root of all sin. I have found this to my cost.⁵⁴

Miss More's third great theme of instruction for the middle orders is best exemplified in her tract, A Cure for Melancholy, shewing the Way to do much Good with little Money. In it, she attempted to make the middle orders aware of their responsibilities towards the poor, and to show them how these responsibilities might be best discharged.

Mrs. Jones, a widow in straightened circumstances, is distressed that she cannot do more for the poor of her parish. When Mr. Simpson, the local vicar, hears of her feelings, he advises her that her best contribution to the welfare of the poor lies, not in giving them money, but in going out into the parish and engaging in 'useful work'. Mrs. Jones sets out on a tour of the parish to see what can be done.

She immediately discovers that the local baker is selling under-weight loaves of bread. After convincing the poor of the parish that it is not unbecoming a man or woman to inform on cheats and criminals, she has the wicked baker prosecuted. Realising that the poor are paying a great deal more than things are worth by buying on credit, she visits

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 395-396.

them all and persuades them to deal with a store that sells for cash only. Before long, she has encouraged the rich to buy only the most expensive cuts of meat and to leave all the cheap joints for the poor. She has cut down attendance at the local ale-house and dissuaded the poor from drinking tea. Finally, she revives a Charity School for servants in the village and establishes a Sunday school,⁵⁵ taking it upon herself to visit all the local rich to obtain subscriptions. Those members of the middle ranks who really desire to help the poor are urged to "go and do likewise!"⁵⁶

There were, then, three principal messages that Hannah More wished to convey to the middle ranks of society. First, they should avoid any literature which smacked of the 'new school of philosophy', and make strenuous efforts to shield their servants from its pernicious influence. Secondly, they should resist the temptation to rise in the world by giving their children a 'fashionable education'. Finally, they should accept their responsibility for improving the condition of the poor and realise that this responsibility consists of more than merely subscribing to worthy causes.

Ironically, none of the neo-classical or didactic literary works of Miss More gained her more universal acclaim than her Cheap Repository. Letters of thanks and praise poured to her cottage at Cowslip Green, and the stream of visitors each summer grew in volume.

While it is true that the number of tracts published was in excess

⁵⁵Miss More wrote two further tracts concerning the activities of Mrs. Jones. They were entitled The Sunday School, and The History of Hester Wilmot.

⁵⁶Hannah More, A Cure for Melancholy, shewing the Way to do much Good with little Money, Works, Vol. II. p. 435.

of the amount distributed, there can be little doubt that an enormous number found their way into the homes of the poor. Due to the efficiency of Miss More's distributing committees, those members of the lower order who were unfortunate enough to find themselves in poorhouses, hospitals, prisons or the armed services could hardly have escaped the tracts. Whatever may be said of their content, they were read and must be considered at least a contributory influence stemming the tide of revolution and disaffection in England.⁵⁷

However, the Cheap Repository did arouse criticism, some of it from most unexpected quarters. The Evangelical Magazine, for example, disapproved of the "flowers of fiction" contained in the tracts and solemnly advised that nothing but real facts be included in them.⁵⁸ Many of her Evangelical friends were disappointed at the lack of religion in some of them and their de-emphasis of personal conversion. The Religious Tract Society, founded in 1799, was forced to declare that the tracts were "doctrinally inadequate," regretting that they "did not contain a fuller statement of the great Evangelical principles of the Christian faith."⁵⁹

Easier to understand is the criticism which came from those who sought to disassociate religion and the preservation of the existing social and political order. Cobbett, for example, though warmly approving

⁵⁷The significance of the Cheap Repository is discussed further in Chapter VIII, pp. 199-201.

⁵⁸Cited in Paul Sangster, Pity My Simplicity, The Evangelical Revival and The Religious Education of Children, 1738-1800. The Epworth Press, London, 1963. p. 60.

⁵⁹Cited in Jones, op. cit., p. 150.

of the tracts in the nineties, was soon attacking Miss More and her literature,⁶⁰ and in 1821 began his own Monthly Religious Tracts.

Once the threat of widespread disaffection among the lower orders and the possibility of revolution had receded, it was rumoured by some 'liberals' that Miss More was little more than a political hireling, paid to gain support for a tottering government by filling the common people with hatred of the French. In his libellous biography of Miss More, written in 1802, William Shaw described all her literary efforts as "eight volumes of inanity, much chaff and little wheat."⁶¹ Of the author of Village Politics, he asserted, "No hireling, to render the war popular. . . could be more venal, or less respect truth and decency."⁶²

But the criticism cannot detract from the magnitude of Miss More's achievement. She had succeeded in reconciling in simple, even vulgar, language the political doctrines of Burke, the principles of Evangelicalism and 'the Gospel of Self Help'. In the 1790s, the widespread acceptance of the political and social viewpoints expressed in the tracts gave added authority to the other ideas they contained. And the popularity of the tracts did not disappear as these political and social doctrines found less favour among all ranks of English society. It is not without significance that, during the course of research for this thesis, the author discovered a copy of an edition of the Cheap Repository which

⁶⁰Supra., Chapter V, pp. 121-122.

⁶¹Rev. Sir Archibald MacSarcasm, Bart, (William Shaw), The Life of Hannah More, with a critical review of her writings. T. Hurst, London 1802. p. 1.

⁶²Ibid., p. 18.

had been given as a birthday present to a six year old boy in 1851.
The reputation of the tracts as safe and instructive reading matter,
for young and old, died hard in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER VII

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN OF RANK AND FORTUNE

Hannah More's interest in the education of women stemmed not only from her experience as a teacher, but also from her awareness of the lack of vital Christianity and consequently of a consistent morality among the upper orders of society. Like Wilberforce, she had set herself "the object of the reformation of the manners" of her countrymen. She realised that it was impossible to legislate morality and, although she approved of the proclamation of George III against vice and immorality¹ and of the activities of the new Society for the Reformation of Manners,² she well knew that their influence would be felt mainly among the lower and lower middle classes. Their value would be negligible unless the upper orders could also be reformed. Any permanent change in the religious and moral climate had, in fact, to begin at the top and permeate from there down to the lower layers.

¹In 1787, George III had issued a 'Royal Proclamation against Vice and Immorality.' Neglect of Sunday Observance, excessive drinking, profanity, immoral and disorderly conduct, the keeping of public gaming houses, and the sale of loose, indecent or blasphemous publications were all made illegal. Few, if any, of the middle or upper orders were affected by the Proclamation.

²'The Society for Carrying into Effect His Majesty's Proclamation against Vice and Immorality' was formed to bring to the attention of magistrates any activities which were deemed immoral or vicious.

Reformation must begin with the GREAT, or it will never be effectual. Their example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect to reform the poor while the opulent are corrupt, is to throw odours into the stream while the springs are poisoned.³

It followed therefore that the importance of a correct education was directly proportionate to the amount of rank and influence possessed by the person to be educated, and there is little doubt that Hannah More considered her didactic writings for the upper orders her most valuable work.

There were two distinct aspects of the didactic writings of Hannah More. She pointed out to the 'great' their many shortcomings, the symptoms of their lack of a vital religion. Thus, all her books contained criticisms of contemporary society, its fashions and manners. These shortcomings were then traced to their common source, the lack of Christian principles, which was in turn considered the result of a defective education. This second aspect of her writings meant that she was forced not only to show what was wrong with society and particularly with contemporary education, but also to suggest the only real remedy, a correct Christian education.

Unfortunately, she never separated the two aspects of her work, and nowhere in her writings can one find a coherent analysis of the faults of society and contemporary education or a neatly packaged theory of education. Yet, if her didactic books are considered as a whole, it is possible to construct both a consistent analysis of the defects of society and contemporary education, and logical, well-structured educational recommendations.

The didactic books of Hannah More that bore directly or indirectly on education were several, each dealing with essentially the same problems

³Hannah More, Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society, Works, Vol. III. D. Graisberry, London, 1803. p. 306.

and containing the same recommendations. Her first book written for the 'great' was a slim volume entitled Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society, published in 1788. Intended for those "commonly termed, by the courtesy of the world, good kind of people,"⁴ the book pointed out that, although these 'good sort' of people had many virtues, charity, generosity, good-nature, they were devoid of a vital religion, and their actions sprang not from religious principles but mere human motives. Consequently, they possessed no consistency of moral behaviour, and many 'petty domestic evils' were allowed to go unchecked. Miss More went on to discuss several of these 'less-obvious' faults, employing hairdressers on Sunday, tipping servants with 'card-money', attending Sunday concerts and forcing servants to lie by instructing them to tell visitors the master was 'not at home'. She concluded with a strong plea that the influential recognize their responsibility to set an example for the rest of society, and the assertion that this correct example could only come from true Christian principles.

The success of this first book encouraged her to write a second, a more lengthy treatise entitled An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, which appeared in 1790. It was a much more forthright condemnation of the mores of the upper orders than its predecessor and Miss Meakin is probably correct in her assertion that "there was, perhaps, no clergyman living who would have dared to write it."⁵ Again, the book was addressed not only to

⁴Ibid., p. 266.

⁵Annette M. B. Meakin, Hannah More, John Murray, London, 1919. p. 303.

Miss Meakin believes that the clergy identified themselves so closely with the upper orders and were so dependent on their goodwill, that none of them dared to criticise polite society.

those "who, whether from disbelief or whatever other cause, avowedly neglect the duties of Christianity," but to that "decent class also, who, while they acknowledge their belief of its truth by a public profession, ... yet exhibit little of its spirit in their general temper and conduct."⁶ Its object was first to demonstrate "the visible decline in piety among the higher ranks," and then to

remark on the notorious effects of the decay of this religious principle, as it corrupts our mode of education, infests domestic conduct, spreads the contagion downwards among servants and inferiors, and influences our general manners, habits, and conversation.⁷

In no uncertain terms, she pointed out the un-Christian characteristics of fashionable society. Indeed, "an ignorant and unprejudiced spectator, . . . brought hither from the other hemisphere,"⁸ and set down amid the so-called 'best company', would never guess that he was in a Christian country.

How would the petrified inquirer be astonished, if he were told that all these gay, thoughtless, luxurious, dissipated persons professed a religion, meek, spiritual, self-denying: of which humility, poverty of spirit, a renewed mind, and non-conformity to the world, were specific distinctions.⁹

The fashionable, she asserted, tended to equate isolated virtuous acts with Christianity. But Christianity was more than a system of ethics; it "must be embraced entirely, if it be received at all",¹⁰ and there could be no consistency of moral behaviour which did not spring "from a settled propensity to obey the whole will of God."¹¹

⁶Hannah More, An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, Works, Vol. III. p. 315. Hereafter referred to as An Estimate.

⁷Ibid., pp. 322-323.

⁸Ibid., p. 392

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 407

¹¹Ibid., p. 337.

Christian principles, however, were not innate in man. One did not become a Christian by accident and there was, therefore, no hope for a reformation of society without the widespread introduction of a correct religious education for the children of the 'great'.

Her third and most important book concerning education was her Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a View to the Principles and Conduct of Women of Rank and Fortune, published in 1799. The book further developed the thesis, outlined briefly in her two previous works, that the irreligion and gay dissipation of fashionable women were due to a defective education which, rather than infusing correct Christian principles, tended only to prepare them for the frivolous society of which their parents were a part. Although she insisted that "it is far from being the object of this slight work to offer a regular plan of female education,"¹² nevertheless, sprinkled throughout the book were recommendations for a correct religious education. Jones is of the opinion that the basic tenet of the book was that "the regeneration of society on a christian basis could be achieved by the moral excellence of educated women."¹³ The tone of the criticism was, if anything, more forthright and its success considerable.

In 1805, Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess was published. The book was written even more quickly than its predecessors and, like her other works, lacked any plan or systematic organisation of material. Miss M. A. Hopkins described the book in the following words:

¹²Hannah More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, Ibid. Vol. IV. p. 35. Hereafter referred to as Strictures.

¹³M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952. p. 116.

The book is a sort of college course in one volume. It contains remarks on forming the mind; on the acquisition of knowledge; something of ancient history and historians; a good deal about English history; the necessity of religion; the true arts of popularity; the importance of the royal example; conversation; manners; moral calculation; observations on flattery, books, writers, the Holy Scriptures, the Church, and like subjects; not forgetting warnings against Louis XIV, accepting Voltaire's opinions, or being in any way influenced by the French; the whole written in generalities which could offend no one.¹⁴

Although it is true that the book did not contain the same trenchant criticisms of contemporary society and education found in her previous works, it was intensely pious in tone and contained essentially the same educational recommendations as her earlier books.

Her final important didactic and educational work was written in 1808 and took, surprisingly, the form of a novel. Its full title was Coelebs in Search of a Wife: Comprehending Observations on Domestic Habits and Manners, Religion and Morals. In view of what she had written about novels and their pernicious influence on women,¹⁵ it must have been with some soul-searching that she allowed herself to use this particular literary form. In the preface to the book, Miss More admitted that she was reluctant to allow this, her latest literary effort, to be published. She well realised that as a novel it had little to recommend it, and owned quite frankly that "the texture of the narrative is so slight, that it barely serves for a ground into which to weave the sentiments and observations which it was designed to introduce."¹⁶

¹⁴M. A. Hopkins, Hannah More and Her Circle, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1947. p. 228.

¹⁵Infra., pp. 176-177.

¹⁶Hannah More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife. T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1813. Vol. I. p. ix. Hereafter referred to as Coelebs.

For a novel of two volumes and some 800 pages, the plot is certainly a little thin. Coelebs (his real name is Charles) is a young well-to-do landowner, who, on the death of his pious parents, resolves to seek out a suitable wife. He decides to visit his father's best friend, the equally pious Mr. Stanley, and his family, who live not far from London. Lucilla, the well-educated, modest and very religious daughter of Mr. Stanley, possesses all those qualities which Charles had been taught to look for in a wife. By the end of the first volume, he has decided to propose to her. His rival suitor, a dissipated young lord, is also attracted by Lucilla's modesty and piety. But despite his good looks, his money and his title, he obviously has no chance of success. Eventually, Charles proposes, is accepted, and returns to his estate to await the wedding day.

In spite of the fact that the plot proceeds at a snail's pace and often slows to a complete stop for chapter after chapter, the book is never dull. The plot serves only to introduce character types from contemporary society. Once 'on stage', each character, together with his or her family, is examined by the Evangelical Charles and Mr. Stanley, and he, his family and the education they are giving their children judged in the cold light of a 'vital' Christianity. The book is, in fact, a treatise on education designed, as Miss More herself pointed out, to show "how religion may be brought to mix with the concerns of ordinary life," to point out "material defects . . . in fashionable education," and to suggest that "females of the higher class may combine more domestic knowledge with more intellectual acquirement, that they may be

at the same time more knowing and more useful."¹⁷

Thus, Charles, while in London, visits Mrs. Ranby and her daughters, whose education has enabled them to play the piano and harp, to sign, paint, draw, and wear immodest clothes in a singularly immodest fashion. Needless to say, they hardly qualify as potential brides for the pious Charles.

He meets Lady Denham and her daughter, both of whom represent nominal Christians at their worst. While observing all the outward signs of Christianity, supporting fashionable charities, fasting when it suits them, neither of them has any vitality of religion. Eventually, the unfortunate Miss Denham, devoid of any consistent principles of moral conduct, elopes with a 'ne'er do well' opera singer, the repulsive Mr. Squallini.

The education that Mrs. Fentham gives her daughters is characterised by artificiality and superficiality and is designed to give them all the worldly accomplishments needed to 'catch the biggest fish in the pond.' This 'Machievellian match-maker' comes to a suitable end when her husband goes bankrupt and the family is deserted by all their shallow friends, who are also caught up in the race for the top matrimonial prizes.

Character after character makes his or her appearance and only the real Christians, Mr. Stanley, his family and, of course, Charles, emerge from the plot with any assurance of happiness in this life and the next.

Although the sales of Coelebs were enormous, the book again aroused

¹⁷Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

considerable criticism. The literary critics were delighted with the opportunity of 'setting upon' a work so devoid of literary merit. The Edinburgh Review and London Review fell upon Coelebs and enjoyed a Roman holiday. But the unkindest cut of all came from a surprising quarter, the Evangelical Christian Observer, which somehow was able to discover in the book "some want of taste and strict moral delicacy."¹⁸ Even some of Miss More's closest Evangelical friends were disappointed when they learned that she was the author. Miss More did not attempt another novel.

These were the principal didactic writings of Hannah More, and it is from these works that her analysis of what ailed contemporary education and her educational recommendations must be drawn.

Most, if not all, of the defects of contemporary education sprang from the neglect of what should have been the cornerstone of all education, a recognition of the innate corruptness of human nature.

Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify?¹⁹

A failure to appreciate the significance of the general corruption of human nature as it applied to one's own children meant that no real effort was made to counteract it by instilling Christian principles and habits of restraint. In Coelebs, for example, Mrs. Ranby, while admitting the general corruption of man, will not allow anyone, not even her husband, to mention her own or her daughters' corrupt nature. In the course of

¹⁸Cited in Jones, op. cit., p. 198.

¹⁹More, Strictures, p. 36.

the inevitable conversation about religion, Mr. Ranby politely observes,

"You accuse yourself rather too heavily my dear, you have sins to be sure." "And pray what sins have I, Mr. Ranby?" said she, turning upon him with so much quickness that the poor man started. "Nay," said he meekly, "I did not mean to offend you; so far from it, that hearing you condemn yourself so grievously, I intended to comfort you, and to say that, except for a few faults - " "And pray what faults?" interrupted she, continuing to speak, however, lest he should catch an interval to tell them. "I defy you Mr. Ranby to produce one."²⁰

Mrs. Ranby's daughters, of course, have no knowledge of their own corrupt natures, have received no training in Christian principles, have no control over their desires and passions, and no consistency of moral conduct.

Hannah More attributed this de-emphasis of the depravity of human nature to the growing concern in the eighteenth century for the rights of man, which itself derived from a mistaken belief in the innate goodness of man. She made it clear to her readers that she had little time for talk about the abstract rights of man, and still less for discussions about the rights of women and children.²¹

The constant repetition of this mistaken view of the innate goodness of man had resulted in "the locality of Hell and the existence of an Evil Spirit [being] considered as abstract ideas, . . . set aside as topics too vulgar for the polished, too illiberal for the learned, and as savouring too much of credulity for the enlightened."²²

In its effect upon education, such a view of man was disastrous. In the first place, since children were thought of primarily as innocent

²⁰More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 60-61.

²¹More, Strictures, p. 91.

²²More, An Estimate, p. 328.

and 'unaccountable' beings, it was not considered necessary to counter-act their natural desires by infusing early the principles of Christianity. Indeed, it had become the fashion to delay religious instruction until the youth was considered old enough to judge for himself the truth and value of religion. Even in those families who felt that religion should, perhaps, be included in the early education of their children, religious education consisted only of "mere verbal rituals and dry systems", and was "too often considered as an act of the memory than of the heart and affections; as a dry duty, rather than a lively pleasure."²³ Without the restraining influence of Christian principles, young people rapidly fell prey to their uncontrolled appetites and desires.

Equally unfortunate was the fact that these appetites and desires were often considered not to require restraint. Children were, in fact, over-indulged. As Mr. Stanley observes in *Coelebs*,

I know not whether the increased insubordination of children is owing to the new school of philosophy and politics, but it seems to me to make part of the system. When I go sometimes to stay with a friend in town to do business, she is always making apologies that she cannot go out with me - 'her daughters want the coach.' - If I ask leave to see the friends who call on me in such a room, - 'her daughters have company there, or they want the room for their music, or it is preparing for the children's ball in the evening'. There certainly prevails a spirit of independence, a revolutionary spirit, a separation from the parent state. IT IS THE CHILDREN'S WORLD.²⁴

A further manifestation of the ever-recurring theme of the rights of man was the growing tendency among people of the middle ranks to attempt to educate their children above their station. Even worse, they

²³More, Strictures, pp. 152-153.

²⁴More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 398-399.

were emulating the education of the upper orders, which, emphasising the acquisition of mere worldly accomplishments, was itself full of defects.

This phrenzy of accomplishments, unhappily is no longer restricted within the usual limits of rank and fortune; the middle orders have caught the contagion, and it rages downward with increasing and destructive violence.... . And is it not obvious that as far as this epidemical mania has spread, this very valuable part of society is declining in usefulness, as it rises in its ill-founded pretensions to elegance?²⁵

And, of course, they could never totally erase that "distinction which riches and poverty have established between those of the higher and lower orders of the laity."²⁶

The desire to see their daughters shine in the gay and dissipated society of which they were a part or which they hoped to enter resulted in an education that concentrated almost entirely on giving the young what were commonly called 'accomplishments'. While Hannah More recognised that "the customs which fashion has established, when they are not hostile to virtue, should unquestionably be pursued in the education of ladies" and that "piety maintains no natural war with elegance," the time and money "lavished on arts, which add little to the intrinsic value of life, should have limitations."²⁷ But what should have been one of the least important aspects of education was receiving most attention. One would have thought that "human life consisted of one universal holiday, and that the grand contest was, who should be most eminently qualified to excel, and carry off the prize in the various shows

²⁵More, Strictures, p. 39.

²⁶More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 209.

²⁷More, Strictures, p. 49.

and games which were intended to be exhibited in it."²⁸ Thus, young ladies spent their time learning to play musical instruments, to sing, dance, paint and draw, dress in the latest fashion, and be charming to young men. Even very young children had their health and happiness jeopardized by their parents' insistence on their attending that appalling modern invention, the baby-ball, which was intended to prepare them for the gay social life to which they would fall heir.²⁹ Yet what a travesty of childhood it was!

To behold lilliputian coquettes, projecting dresses, studying colours, assorting ribands, mixing flowers, and choosing feathers; their little hearts beating with hopes about partners and fears about rivals; to see their fresh cheeks pale after the midnight supper, their aching heads and unbraced nerves, disqualifying the little languid beings for the next day's task; and to hear the grave apology, "that it is owing to the wine, the crowd, the heated room of the last night's ball; all this, I say, would really be as ludicrous, if the mischief of the thing did not take off from the merriment of it,"³⁰

Not only was an education of accomplishments expensive in time and money that could profitably be spent in some other way, it was largely a useless education, in the sense that it did not prepare the child for life as it was to be lived. The time to be spent in ball-rooms and at social gatherings charming young men would be much less than that to be spent maintaining and running a home. Yet the arts of household economy and all they entailed were considered, if at all, grossly inferior to those which contributed to making an impressive showing in fashionable society.

²⁸Ibid., p. 43.

²⁹The criticism of Baby Balls gained Miss More the reputation of a puritanical kill-joy. See: Hannah More to Wilberforce, William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I. pp. 504-505.

³⁰More, Strictures, pp. 54-55.

In Coelebs, for example, Mr. Flam, the village squire, has a daughter who, while she can sing charmingly and is busy learning the piano and harp, cooks atrociously and has not the least inkling how to manage a household. While Mr. Flam bemoans his lot, he can do nothing against his wife's passionate desire to have her daughter shine on the rare occasions that she will make her appearance in polite society.

The superficiality of this kind of education was most obvious in its intellectual aspects. Knowledge was no longer considered valuable for its intrinsic interest or its mental discipline value; it was an ornament to be purchased and paraded in company. The ease and speed with which the acquisition of the ornament could be made were the criteria for judging the worth of a teacher or book. Thus, education had degenerated into little more than a series of techniques designed to enable the young lady to acquire rapidly and easily the outward signs of being learned, without in fact having learned anything.

The swarms of Abridgments, Beauties, and Compendiums, which form too considerable a part of a young lady's library, may be considered in many instances as an infallible receipt for making a superficial mind. And it is not difficult to trace back to their shallow sources the hackney'd quotations of certain accomplished young ladies, who will frequently be found not to have come legitimately by anything they know. Human inconsistency in this, as in other cases, wants to combine two irreconcilable things; it strives to unite the reputation of knowledge with the pleasures of idleness, forgetting that nothing that is valuable can be obtained without sacrifices, and that if we would purchase knowledge, we must pay for it the fair and lawful price of time and industry.³¹

In Coelebs, Miss More brilliantly illustrated this kind of superficial education which, seeking to teach everything, succeeded in accom-

³¹Ibid., pp. 111-112.

plishing little or nothing. On being questioned by Mr. Stanley about her activities during the past winter, young Miss Rattle replies,

I have not been idle, if I must speak the truth. One has so many things to learn, you know. I have gone on with my French and Italian of course, and I am beginning German. Then comes my drawing master; he teaches me to paint flowers and shells, and to draw ruins and buildings, and to take views. He is a good soul, and is finishing a set of fire-screens which I began for mamma. He does help me to be sure, but I do some of it myself, don't I mamma?

And then I learn varnishing, and gilding, and japaning. And next winter I shall learn modelling, and etching, and engraving in mezzotinto and aquatinta, for Lady Di. Dash learns etching, and mamma says, as I shall have a better fortune than Lady Di., she vows I shall learn everything she does. Then I have a dancing master, who teaches me the Scotch and Irish steps; and another who teaches me attitudes, and I shall soon learn the waltz, and I can stand longer on one leg already than Lady Di.. Then I have a singing master, and another who teaches me the harp, and another for the pianoforte. And what little time I can spare from these principal things, I give by odd minutes to ancient and modern history, and geography, and astronomy, and grammar, and botany. Then I attend lectures on chemistry and experimental philosophy, for as I am not yet come out, I have not much to do in the evenings: and mamma says, there is nothing in the world that money can pay for, but what I shall learn. And I run so delightfully fast from one thing to another that I am never tired. But I shan't have a great while to work so hard, for as soon as I come out, I shall give it all up, except for music and dancing.³²

Superficiality of knowledge was bad enough, but, when combined with the development of an excessive and ill-directed sensibility, the results were quite disastrous. Sensibility, governed and directed by the passions, the feelings or the heart, was opposed to sound reasoned judgement. While Miss More recognised that it would be "cruel to chill the precious sensibility of an ingenuous soul by treating with supercilious coldness and unfeeling ridicule every indication of a warm, tender, disinterested, and enthusiastic spirit," if cultivated to excess,

³²More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 333-335.

this same sensibility could lead a young lady into all manner of pitfalls.

Flippancy, impetuosity, resentment, and violence of spirit, grow out of this disposition, which will be rather promoted than corrected by the system of education in which emotions are too early and too much excited, and tastes and feelings are considered as too exclusively making up the whole of the female character;³³

Miss More went further and boldly asserted that "if we were to enquire into the remote cause of some of the blackest crimes in the annals of mankind, profligacy, murder, and especially suicide, we might trace them back to this original principle, an ungoverned Sensibility."³⁴

The chief culprits in the development of an ill-directed sensibility were romantic poetry and novels, play-going, opera and music. Mr. Stanley, during a conversation on the "unhappy effects of misguided passion,"

lamented that novels, with a few admirable exceptions, had done infinite mischief by so completely establishing the omnipotence of love, that the young reader was almost systematically taught an unresisting submission to a feeling, because the feeling was commonly represented as irresistible.³⁵

These defects of contemporary education manifested themselves most clearly in that all too common characteristic in young ladies of rank, their total lack of a sense of propriety. Extravagance and immodesty of dress, improper topics of conversation and familiarity with men were not only not condemned but openly condoned. Propriety, "the result of general excellence [and] the criterion of true taste, right principle, and

³³More, Strictures, p. 241.

³⁴Ibid., p. 240.

³⁵More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 245.

genuine feeling, in a woman."³⁶ had all but disappeared from fashionable society. Yet, without it, a young lady could not be agreeable in polite company. As Mr. Stanley observes to his young daughter,

To a correct mind, no one can be agreeable who is incorrect. Propriety is so indispensable to agreeableness, that when a lady allows herself to make any, even the smallest, sacrifice of veracity, religion, modesty, candour, or the decorum of the sex, she may be shining, she may be shewy, she may be amusing, but she cannot, properly speaking, be agreeable.³⁷

For these many and varied ills which beset contemporary education, there could be no piecemeal remedies. The education of young ladies of rank and fortune needed to be placed on an entirely new foundation, that of Christian principles and doctrine, and it was on this base that Miss More constructed her theory of the correct education for young ladies.

As was suggested above, the starting point of any education for any rank should be a full recognition of the innate corruptness of human nature.

If I were asked what quality is most important in an instructor of youth, I should not hesitate to reply, such a strong impression of the corruption of our nature, as should insure a disposition to counteract it; together with such a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its most secret and complicated workings.³⁸

The educator must realise that children were "fallen, depraved and helpless creatures," and that this natural corruption, "if not counteracted , will spread itself through the whole soul, disfigure the character

³⁶More, Strictures, p. 4.

³⁷More, Coelebs, Vol. II. pp. 96-97.

³⁸More, Strictures, p. 36.

and disorder the life."³⁹

Yet, while education was to be based on a recognition of this common element in all human beings, it must make allowance for the uniqueness of the sexes. Each sex had its "proper excellencies" and education, rather than seeking "to do away with distinctions which increase the mutual benefits and enhance the satisfactions of life,"⁴⁰ must develop these 'proper excellencies' of women and men. For example, while it was true that a woman had a less firm "texture of mind"⁴¹ than a man, and that she lacked his judgement and capacity "for deep and daring scenes of action," she possessed "other requisites, better adapted to answer the end and purpose of her being."⁴² Her superiority lay in her "high degree of delicacy and quickness of perception," her intuitive tact, her "naturally soft and flexible heart," and in her "feeling.... more intimately the want of a strength which is not her own."⁴³ Moreover, possessing less "integral understanding," she was less inclined to be sceptical and did not "acquire a strong partiality for the manners of Pagan antiquity, and the documents of Pagan philosophy."⁴⁴ She was thus in much less danger than a man of having "her principles warped." The weaker sex could "take comfort that in their very exemption from privil-

³⁹Hannah More, Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess. T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1805, Vol. I. pp. 224-225. Hereafter referred to as Hints.

⁴⁰More, Strictures, p. 193.

⁴¹Miss More nowhere defined 'texture of mind', but it seems likely that she meant by it the faculty of reason as manifested in the power of generalisation and judgement.

⁴²More, Strictures, p. 195.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 196-199.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 200-201.

eges which they are sometimes foolishly disposed to envy, consists not only their security, but their happiness."⁴⁵

The education of women should not seek to make women equal to men in intellectual accomplishments, but to develop those qualities which were peculiarly their own. Women had one unique talent and one special responsibility, influence over men. Indeed, on the prevailing sentiments and habits of women depended "the general state of civilised society."⁴⁶ Not only did they influence the manners of men, but their very characters. That the influence women exerted was the right one was the responsibility of parent and teacher.

Out of these views of human nature and woman arose the general and specific aims of Hannah More's theory of education. The basic aim of all education was the inculcation of principles of Christianity. Only this could effectively counteract man's corrupt nature and guarantee temporal and eternal happiness. It was not enough merely to lay down rules and regulations for moral behaviour; principles had to be established. And there was no method of establishing sound religious principles except by an early and careful indoctrination into Christianity. At the same time, "it is our duty, to take care that those principles be sound and just; that the religion we teach be the religion of the Bible, and not the invention of human error or superstition."⁴⁷ In effect, then, this basic aim of education was concerned not only with teaching a set

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 202.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 140.

body of subject matter or developing certain faculties of the mind, but with creating values and beliefs; with, as Miss More freely admitted, 'prejudicing the child' to a particular way of life.

Connected with and proceeding alongside the inculcation of true Christian principles was the formation of proper habits. "It can never be too often repeated that one of the great objects of education is the forming of habits."⁴⁸ Miss More's view of habits was an interesting one, and somewhat reminiscent of Rousseau's ideas of habit formation.

The forming of any one good habit seems to be effected rather by avoiding the opposite bad habit, and resisting every temptation to the opposite vice, than by the mere occasional practice of the virtue required. Humility, for instance, is less an act than a disposition of mind. It is not so much a single performance of some detached humble deed, as an incessant watchfulness against every propensity to pride. Sobriety is a conscientious habit of resisting every incentive to intemperance. - Meekness is best attained and exemplified by guarding against every tendency to anger, impatience, and resentment. - A habit of attention and application is formed by early and constant vigilance against a trifling spirit and a wandering mind.⁴⁹

In other words, good habits were positive qualities only in the sense that they sprang from self-control, restraint and resistance to natural desires. Thus, the first habit to be formed in every human being should be patience and cheerfulness "under postponed and restricted gratification" of desires.⁵⁰ As Mr. Stanley, discussing the education of his daughters, asserts, "To counteract selfishness, that inborn, inbred mischief, I hold to be the great art of education."⁵¹

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 81

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰More, Hints, Vol. I. p. 4.

⁵¹More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 387-388.

"Together with the formation of useful habits, an adequate attention [should] be employed to the forming of the judgement."⁵²

Judgement, in Miss More's view, was that faculty which enabled its possessor to estimate correctly the relative worth of a thing, decide whether it was worthy of attention or merely frivolous, and regulate the habits. For example, without judgement, economy could degenerate into meanness, honesty into obstinacy, perseverance into perverseness, and firmness into prejudice.⁵³ Thus, a person

may have been well instructed in history, belles lettres, philosophy and languages and yet have received a defective education if the formation of his judgement has been neglected. For it is not important to know everything, as to know the exact value of every-thing, to appreciate what we learn, to arrange what we know.⁵⁴

These were the three great aims of education, the inculcation of Christian principles, the formation of proper habits and the development of a sound judgement. It was, of course, basically a 'character development' education in the best tradition of John Locke. In Coelebs, Charles' mother gives him her own (and Hannah More's) definition of a correct education for young ladies.

For my own part I call education, not that which smothers a woman with accomplishments, but that which tends to consolidate a firm and regular system of character; that which tends to form a friend, a companion, and a wife. I call education, not that which is made up of the shreds and patches of useless arts, but that which inculcates principles, polishes taste, regulates temper, cultivates reason, subdues the passions, directs the feelings, habituates to reflection, trains to self-denial, and more especially, that which refers all actions, feelings, sentiments, tastes, and passions, to the love and fear of God.⁵⁵

⁵²More, Strictures, p. 87.

⁵³Ibid. pp. 87-89.

⁵⁴More, Hints, Vol. I. p. 27

⁵⁵More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 14.

What should comprise the content of such an education? Since the whole of education was avowedly religious in nature, "an early introduction to Scripture will doubtless be considered as a matter of prime concern."⁵⁶ There was no sure way to teach Christian principles except by constant reference to the source of all Christian knowledge, the Bible. "Histories of the Bible, and commentaries on the Bible, for the use of children, though valuable in their way, should never be used as substitutes for the Bible itself," and while children should "read the commentary for the improvement of the understanding, they should 'mark, learn, and inwardly digest' the Bible for the comfort and edification of the heart."⁵⁷ As Mr. Stanley observes, "Give them the Bible itself. I never yet knew a child who did not delight in the bible histories, and who did not desire to hear them again and again."⁵⁸

Although Miss More continually insisted that the Bible must be the source of true Christian principles and piety, she also believed that the Church of England, "of all the similar institutions which have been known in the Christian World, [was] the most admirably fitted for its purpose."⁵⁹ Thus, the Bible was to be supplemented by the Church Catechism, which "was written for children, and contains all the seeds and principles of Christianity for men."⁶⁰

A third aspect of purely religious education involved furnishing the young with a scheme of prayer. Beginning with the shorter and simpler prayers, the child should be taught to examine the content of each, analyse

⁵⁶More, Hints. Vol. I. p. 212. ⁵⁷More, Strictures, p. 157.

⁵⁸More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 385. ⁵⁹More, Hints, Vol. II. p. 301.

⁶⁰More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 383.

it and dissect it; in short, to discover just what it is he or she was repeating. "Prayer should not be swallowed. It is a regular prescription which should stand analysis and examination . . .,"⁶¹ and the proper place for this procedure was the home and classroom.

Chief among the secular studies, if any subject in Miss More's scheme of education could be said to be secular, was history. The moral benefits that might be derived from a study of history were several.

The study of history may serve to give a clearer insight into the corruption of human nature:

It may help to show the plan of Providence in the direction of events, and in the use of unworthy instruments:

It may assist in the vindication of Providence, in the common failure of virtue, and the frequent success of vice:

It may lead to a distrust of our judgement:⁶²

It may contribute to our improvement in self-knowledge.⁶³

In her Hints for a Young Princess, Miss More devoted seven chapters to the development of the first two of these benefits. She traced the effects of the "finger of the Almighty, governing kings and kingdoms" from ancient Greece and Rome through to the glorious development of the English Constitution. English history was particularly worthy of detailed study, for "what employment of thought can be more interesting, than to trace the providential means, by which such unexampled benefits and blessing have been conferred upon our country?"⁶⁴

⁶¹More, Strictures, p. 173.

⁶²By 'mistrust of judgement' in this context, Miss More meant an avoidance of judging the greatness of people by their contemporary importance. History is a great destroyer of reputations, and by examining men who were admired in their life-times but are now condemned, our judgement of our contemporaries may be shown to be less certain.

⁶³More, Strictures, pp. 120-121. ⁶⁴More, Hints, Vol. II. p. 328.

But although history was a rich source of moral, intellectual and religious instruction and inspiration, the teacher should exercise great caution in his selection of historians. For example, Mr. David Hume, "though the most informing, as well as the most elegant, of all the writers of English history," mistakenly made "morals independent of religion," and refused to lead "the mind to look beyond second causes and human agents."⁶⁵ He, and others like him, had to be regarded with extreme caution or, better still, avoided altogether.

Geography, like history, was a subject well suited to provide moral and religious instruction. Together with natural history, it diverted the attention "to the goodness of Providence, who commonly adapts the various productions of climates to the various wants of the respective inhabitants."⁶⁶

Although Miss More believed that women's minds were inferior to those of men, she was not disposed to 'temper the wind to the shorn lamb'. In fact, women needed to read difficult works as a counterweight to their natural craving for "little, amusing, sentimental books."⁶⁷ Thus, Mrs. Stanley is able to assert "that the very tediousness of her historians had a good effect; they were a useful ballast to her levity, a discipline to her mind, of which she has felt the benefit in her subsequent life."⁶⁸ The books which Miss More recommended for the instruction of the daughters of the great were indeed formidable. "After a proper course of preparatory reading," they should be able "to swallow and digest such strong meat as Watt's or Duncan's little book on Logic, some parts of Mr. Locke's Essay

⁶⁵Ibid., Vol. I. p. 154.

⁶⁶More, Strictures, p. 131.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁸More, Coelebs, Vol. I. p. 381.

on the Human Understanding, and Bishop Butler's Analogy."⁶⁹ Other recommended authors of instructional books included Bacon and Burke.⁷⁰

Particular care should be taken in selecting books for leisure reading for the greatest errors were liable to occur when amusement became the criterion for judging a book. Generally, biographies were infinitely to be preferred to novels, which

however ingeniously they may be written, as they exhibit only fictitious characters, acting in fictitious scenes, on fictitious occasions, and being sometimes the work of writers, who rather guess what the world is, than describe it from their own knowledge, can never give so vivid a picture of life and manners, as is to be found in the memoirs of men who were actual performers on the great stage of the world.⁷¹

Moreover, novels were too often the cause of an 'ill-directed sensibility' and sometimes guilty of promulgating false principles of moral conduct by making mere worldly morality a substitute for religion.

Don Quixote, the Odyssey and Arabian Tales were some of the few works of fiction which delighted "the fancy, without conveying any dangerous lesson to the heart."⁷² The plays of Shakespeare were recommended as showing great insights into the human heart, but

the works of this most unequal of all poets contain so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, and so much that is impure; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels, and with the nicest selection. His more exceptional pieces should not be read at all; and even of the best, much may be omitted.⁷³

⁶⁹More, Strictures, p. 114.

⁷⁰More, Hints, Vol. II. pp. 135 ff.

⁷¹Ibid., Vol. II. pp. 141-142.

⁷²Ibid., Vol. II. pp. 169 ff.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 183-184.

No one welcomed Mr. Bowdler's infamous edition of Shakespear's plays more than Hannah More.

Similarly, poetry should not be judged solely on its artistic worth, but on the sentiments and observations it contained. The danger of poetry producing an excess of sensibility was a real one; yet, by carefully selecting the author, poetry could become a useful medium for conveying sound principles and sentiments. Mr. Stanley, for example, delights his children with a reading of Cowper's The Diverting History of John Gilpin in order to prepare them for his more meaty and rewarding The Task.⁷⁴

The study of foreign languages was recommended for those young ladies who showed an aptitude for and interest in this field. Lucilla Stanley, for instance, is extremely intelligent and her father has taught her Latin, the most useful of foreign languages. For those who were able to master it, it provided the opportunity of learning about the ancient world and helped the student to understand etymology, to be accurate in definition, more exact in her use of language and more graceful in her style of writing.⁷⁵ Next to Latin, as languages worthy of study, came French, German and Italian. But for most young ladies, the time needed to master another language was too great and should be more profitably spent on other subjects.

The sciences did not merit a place in a young lady's education for a knowledge of them was rarely found in a lady of "taste and eleg-

⁷⁴More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 395-396.

⁷⁵More, Hints, Vol. I. pp. 14-15.

ance."⁷⁶ Moreover, they were useless for a young lady of rank. As Charles observes in Coelebs,

Arts which are of immense value in manufactures, won't make my wife's conversation entertaining to me. Discoveries which may greatly improve dyeing and bleaching, will add little to the delights of our summer evening's walk, or winter fireside.⁷⁷

The criterion for judging the worth of any subject must be utility, whether it was instilling principles of religion or religious behaviour, developing the faculty of judgement, disciplining the mind, or providing practical knowledge which could be used in the course of everyday living.

In connection with this last point, Miss More laid great emphasis on the necessity of a thorough training in what she termed 'domestic economy'. Although a lady of rank might never be required to cook, sew and engage in household work, nevertheless, she should be familiar with all of the skills needed to perform these tasks well. The efficient running of a large household required that she supervise all the activities of her servants, and this was impossible without a first-hand knowledge of their duties. In addition, she needed a sound grasp of arithmetic, for it would be her responsibility to look after the accounts of the household. As Mr. Stanley observes, "From the heiresses of the man of rank, to the daughters of the opulent tradesmen, there is no one quality in which young women are so generally deficient as a domestic economy."⁷⁸ This lack of interest in domestic economy as a subject fit for young ladies arose from an inability to weigh correctly the relative value of things;

⁷⁶More, Coelebs, Vol. II. pp. 150-151.

⁷⁷Ibid., Vol. II. p. 152.

⁷⁸Ibid., Vol. II. p. 181.

in fact, from a lack of judgement.

A philosophical lady may 'read Mallebranche, Boyle, and Locke.' She may boast of her intellectual superiority, she may talk of abstract and concrete; of substantial forms and essences; complex ideas and mixed modes; of identity and relation; she may decorate all the logic of one sex with all the rhetoric of the other; yet, if her affairs are delabres, if her house is disorderly, her servants irregular, her children neglected, and her table ill-arranged, she will indicate the want of the most valuable faculty of the human mind, a sound judgement.⁷⁹

An examination of the aims and content of Miss More's ideal education for young ladies illustrates the two dominant influences on her educational thought, her acceptance of the faculty psychology so popular in the eighteenth century and her own militant Evangelicalism. In her views on educational method, these two influences were also in evidence. As we have seen, subject matter might possess an educative value quite apart from its content; it could discipline the mind and strengthen certain desirable faculties at the expense of other less desirable ones. Memorising passages of Plutarch, for example, not only encouraged an elegant style and provided useful topics of conversation, but trained the memory.⁸⁰ In the same way, since there was "no idle way to acquisitions which really deserve the name,"⁸¹ the activity of learning had a moral advantage in that it developed diligence and perseverance and discouraged idleness. Indeed, "knowledge which is acquired by unwearied assiduity is lasting in the possession, and sweet to the possessor; both perhaps in proportion to the cost and labour of the acquisition."⁸² The implications of such a faculty psychology for

⁷⁹Ibid., Vol. II. pp. 176-177

⁸⁰More, Strictures, p. 107.

⁸¹More, Hints, Vol. I. p. 32.

⁸²More, Strictures, p. 107.

educational method are obvious. The habits of perseverance, diligence, restraint and industry were to be formed by the teacher making the child engage in activities which forced him or her to persevere, be diligent, restrain his desires and be industrious.

Such a view of the learning process fitted in perfectly with Miss More's religious beliefs, in which the natural corruption of the child figured prominently. "Education is but an initiation into that life of trial to which we are introduced on our entrance into this world,"⁸³ The child was constantly faced with combatting her corrupt nature, and this continuous battle was most likely to be lost when she was idle. The teacher should therefore never allow the child to be 'at a loose end,' but must develop in her the essential habit of industry.

Every minor misconduct should be treated as a major breach of principle. There were no faults small enough to be considered minor issues. Indeed, there was but one issue, whether she was permitted to follow her own corrupt nature or whether she was taught to resist it. A small lie represented the same breach of principle as a big one and merited the same concern, the same rebuke and the same punishment.⁸⁴

The teacher and parent must look with suspicion on all gratifications of children's appetites and desires. Particular care should be taken never to use gratifications of appetites and desires "as the instruments of recompense, which would look as if we valued them highly,

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴More, Coelebs, Vol. II. pp. 86-87.

and thought them a fit remuneration for merit."⁸⁵ As Mr. Stanley observes, "I would rather show a little indulgence to sensuality as sensuality, than make it the reward of goodness ..."⁸⁶

In her didactic writings, Miss More made no reference to that typically Evangelical 'teaching device,' the deathbed. Perhaps, she felt that such a distinctively Evangelical method of producing a "serious mind" in young people would offend her elevated and worldly-minded readers. It is more likely, however, that she considered the attendance of the young at the death of friends and relatives so normal that it required no special emphasis. From her correspondence, there is no doubt that she thought of the deathbed and funeral as integral and essential elements in a truly religious education.

But there was a good deal more to the educational ideas of Hannah More than eighteenth century faculty psychology and a rather gloomy, authoritarian view of education based on the doctrine of natural corruption. Indeed, in some of her ideas on educational method, there was much that was considerably in advance of her time. She had been a teacher, and a very good one; she knew and loved children, and was loved by them in return. Moreover, though she was violently opposed to anything which smacked of the ideas of "the fastidious Jean Jacques,"⁸⁷ she had read all his works and had been influenced by him more than she realised or cared to admit. Throughout her writings there are almost as many references to young, innocent children being corrupted by a profligate society as there

⁸⁵Ibid., Vol. I. pp. 388-389

⁸⁶Ibid., Vol. I. p. 389

⁸⁷Ibid., Vol. I. p. 401.

are to their naturally corrupt natures. Indeed, in the educational writings of Hannah More we have an interesting example of how the ideas of Rousseau, modified considerably it is true, entered the mainstream of English educational thought in the nineteenth century.

She believed, for example, that authoritarianism and "the harsh doctrine of paternal austerity" were both ill-conceived and harmful to the child. This 'harsh doctrine'

drives the gentle spirit to artifice, and the rugged to despair. It generates deceit and cunning, the most hopeless and hateful in the whole catalogue of female failings. The dread of severity will drive terrified children to seek, not for reformation, but for impunity. A readiness to forgive them promotes frankness: and we should, above all things, encourage them to be frank, in order to come at their faults.⁸⁸

She was, in fact, too good a teacher and knew and loved children too well to lay down rigid rules where discipline was concerned.

A discriminating teacher will appreciate the individual character of each pupil, in order to appropriate her management. We must strengthen the feeble, while we repel the bold. We cannot educate by a receipt; for after studying the best rules, and after digesting them into the best system, much must depend on contingent circumstances; for that which is good may yet be inapplicable.⁸⁹

Equally 'enlightened' was her view that children's play was something more than mere amusement; it was a creative activity. In Coelebs, for example, we find Mr. Stanley himself condemning expensive toys which serve only to amuse the child. He and the ubiquitous Charles have visited a couple whose three children have, respectively, pulled apart an expensive doll and made one from rags, destroyed a painted wooden horse and ridden astride a long rough stick, and broken up a fine gilt coach and nailed together some rough boards into a wheelbarrow. Mr. Stanley observes,

⁸⁸More, Strictures, pp. 92-93. ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 93.

One such actual exemplification of the folly of supposing that injudicious profusion and mistaken fondness can supply that pleasure which must be worked out before it can be enjoyed, is worth a whole folio of argument or exhortation.

It is a sad mistake ... to suppose that youth wants to be so incessantly amused. They want not pleasures to be chalked out for them. Lay a few cheap and coarse materials in their way, and let their own busy invention be suffered to work. They have abundant pleasure in the mere freshness and novelty of life, its unbroken health, its elastic spirits, its versatile temper, and its evernew resources.⁹⁰

If Miss More was prepared to excuse dullness in suitable books on the grounds that it provided 'ballast' for the female mind, she was not willing to forgive the same fault in a teacher. "Do not fancy that a thing is good merely because it is dull."⁹¹ When teaching anything, especially religion, "call it all creation, animate and inanimate, to your aid and accustom your young audience to

Find tongues in trees, books in running brooks
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.⁹²

Subject matter should never be allowed to degenerate into dry, disconnected facts, "some slight acquisition of the memory, ... not grounded in the mind by comment and conversation."⁹³ It had to be made meaningful, in the sense that each isolated fact was related to other facts and the total shown to be an essential unity. As was mentioned above, even a prayer should be systematically analysed, related to other prayers and shown to be part of a unity, a general scheme of prayer.⁹⁴

The role that conversation played in this process of making subject

⁹⁰More, Coelebs, Vol. I. pp. 402-403.

⁹¹More, Strictures, p. 153.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., p. 110.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 173-174.

matter meaningful and a unity was an important one. "Conversation must develop what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently and almost insensibly raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste."⁹⁵ But, even in conversation, the teacher was warned of the unforgivable sin of dullness, of "insipid dogmas and tedious sermonising;" the pupil should "not be led to dread a lecture at every turn, not a dissertation on every occurrence."⁹⁶

Miss More recognised that even the content of education should, within limits, be geared to the interests and aptitudes of the individual student. Mr. Stanley observes, for example,

I am a gardener ... and accustomed to study the genius of the soil before I plant. Most of my daughters, like the daughters of other men, have some one talent, or at least propensity; for parents are too apt to mistake the inclination for genius. The propensity I endeavour to find out, and to cultivate. But if I find the natural bias very strong, and not very safe, I then labour to counteract instead of encouraging the tendency, and try to give it a fresh direction.⁹⁷

She stressed that activity must lie at the heart of the educational process, that nothing could be learned without action on the part of the learner. Children would never become charitable by being lectured on the virtues of benevolence. They had to be taken out among the poor and set to do charitable work. An essential feature of the education of Mr. Stanley's daughters is their practical work among the poor of the parish, visiting the sick, doing household work for them, growing fruit and

⁹⁵More, Hints, Vol. I. p. 28

⁹⁶Ibid., Vol. I. p. 29.

⁹⁷More, Coelebs, Vol. II. p. 238.

vegetables for distribution to the poor, and organising worthwhile activities in the village.

Thus, while it is certainly true that Hannah More's criticisms of contemporary education and her educational recommendations were inspired and influenced primarily by her Evangelicalism, this Evangelicalism was leavened by a good measure of sound common sense derived from her experience as a teacher, and a discernible amount of eighteenth century enlightenment thought. It can, of course, be argued that this 'leavening' resulted in a good deal of ambivalence in her views of the nature of the child and the nature and function of discipline. It is hardly logical, for example, for someone who professed so strong a belief in the innate depravity of children to insist that they be left alone to their own 'busy invention', or that the teacher search out their natural propensities and encourage them. Perhaps her love and respect for children and the state of childhood outweighed the logical consequences for educational method of a belief in the natural corruption of man. Certainly, it is significant that of the same Hannah More who asserted, "Children love fiction. It is often a misleading taste,"⁹⁸ a former pupil could write, "Good woman as she was, she taught me to believe in Tom Thumb nearly as implicitly as Joseph and his brethren."⁹⁹

⁹⁸More, Hints, Vol. II. p. 147.

⁹⁹E. M. Forster, The Forster Papers, Recollections of Miss Marianne Thornton, cited in Jones, op. cit., p. 97.

CHAPTER VIII

IN RETROSPECT

The educational activities of Hannah More were many and varied. She wrote didactic books for the great, treatises on education and devotional works. She was engaged in a large-scale enterprise to provide the lower and middle orders with suitable literature. With her sister, she established a system of schools in the Mendip area to bring religious instruction to the poor. The operation of these schools involved her in the Blagdon Controversy, which focussed attention on many of the important educational and religious issues of the day. It remains to attempt an assessment of the significance of these activities, both for her own generation and for posterity.

The difficulties of assessing the importance of the educational activities of Hannah More are many, even for the period of her own lifetime. In part, this is due to the extravagant praise that was lavished on her by her contemporaries. As Jones has pointed out, "Nothing is more unconvincing than indiscriminate praise,"¹ and the adulation that was bestowed on her by her friends and early biographers have made an accurate estimate of her work extremely difficult. On the other hand, the criticisms of her character, which persisted after her death, and the surprisingly rapid decline of her reputation in the nineteenth century have also tended to mask the true significance of her educational work and writings. As the nineteenth century wears on, attempts to trace the

¹M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952. p. 228.

thread of Evangelicalism, in which, as was suggested above, Hannah More was an important figure, become more and more hazardous. Standish Meacham, in his article 'The Evangelical Inheritance,' has recognised this fundamental difficulty.

It is tempting to search the minds of ... Victorians for fragments of the Evangelical inheritance. The difficulty of doing so lies in the fact that by the 1860s the heritage had become thoroughly diffused. To trace and then to disentangle elements of it from other aspects of Victorian mentality becomes a tricky business.²

Perhaps the safest and most useful assessment of the significance of Hannah More's work and ideas lies in suggesting those aspects and the issues involved which were either typical of her age or anticipated later developments, and in pointing out areas where her influence is most clearly discernible.

Looked at from this perspective, her view of what constituted a suitable education for the lower orders is of particular interest. When she first began her Mendip Operation, there was a considerable body of opinion which felt that even a limited education for the poor was too much. Thus, her espousal of the cause of education for the poor made her a dangerous radical in the eyes of many of her contemporaries. By the time of her death, the two great societies for providing the poor with education were both flourishing, and the question was no longer whether the poor should be educated but rather what should be the nature of their education.

Hannah More represented that body of opinion which felt that the

²Standish Meacham, 'The Evangelical Inheritance,' The Journal of British Studies, Vol. III. No. 1. Nov. 1963. p. 103.

education of the poor should consist almost entirely of religious instruction and vocational training for menial work. If these views were considered radical in 1789, by 1833, when she died, they were already considerably out of date. As early as 1823, she confessed to Wilberforce her dislike of the 'modern system' of educating the poor, which sought to make them "scholars and philosophers" by giving them a 'literary education'. She went on to lament,

In many schools, I am assured, writing and accounts are taught on Sundays. This is a regular apprenticeship to sin. Now, in my poor judgement, all this has a revolutionary as well as an irreligious tendency, and the misfortune is, that the growing ultraism on the side of learning, falsely so called, will irritate and inflame the old bigotry, which hugged absolute ignorance as hidden treasure, not to be parted with, while that sober measure of Christian instruction which lies between the two extremes, will be rejected by both parties.³

Hannah More had committed the unforgivable error of living too long; she came to belong to a past generation and a bygone age. To her friends and contemporaries she was a daring innovator; to the new age a die-hard reactionary. Posterity, however, should judge the educational views of Hannah More in the context of the 1780s rather than the 1820s.

The significance of her Mendip Operation lies not so much in what she set out to do as in what she actually accomplished; the two are rarely identical. It is true that she had set out to Christianise and humanise the local poor, and there is ample evidence to suggest that she did so.⁴ It may well be that the publicity which attached to an enter-

³Hannah More to Wilberforce, 1823, William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley and Burnside, London, 1836. Vol. II. p. 349.

⁴Supra., Chapter IV, pp. 95-96, and Infra, Appendix E. p. 233-243.

prise run by so noted a personality gave prestige to the Sunday school movement and encouraged others 'to go and do likewise'.

More important was the fact that, by establishing Sunday schools, day schools and schools of industry over a wide area, she had created a tradition of education in her locality. Her work in the Mendips should be viewed as part of a great movement, consisting of many private and largely unrelated schemes, to provide the poor with some kind of elementary education. The Sunday school movement can be looked upon, not only as a cheap and effective means of social control and religious indoctrination, but also as an expression of the ideal of universal popular education.⁵

The establishment of the Women's Benefit Societies is of special significance. It has been estimated that, by 1803, over 700,000 of the working class were members of Friendly Societies.⁶ These societies were almost invariably formed and controlled by working class people themselves and have been considered "authentic evidence of the growth of independent working-class culture and institutions."⁷ Those established by the More sisters were unique in that they were almost completely paternalistic, their control being kept as much as possible in the hands of the patronesses. Nevertheless, the sisters had provided the poor with an institution which linked together their interests and which gave them 'a collective self-consciousness', both highly radical innovations in the 1790s.

⁵S. J. Curtis, History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, London, 1957. p. 201.

⁶E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1963. p. 421.

⁷Ibid.

As was suggested above, the Blagdon Controversy, which arose out of Hannah More's Mendip Operation, is important, not only for its immediate and local significance in Somerset, but because of the national issues upon which it focussed attention. Indeed, the villages where Miss More had established schools may be considered as an England in miniature, and a study of the Blagdon Controversy an opportunity of examining in the particular the educational and religious climate of the country in general. The issues of whether the poor should be educated, what should be the content of their education and who should control it were to reoccur periodically throughout the nineteenth century. Equally important, the conflict between the Evangelical party and the Orthodox element in the Church had been brought into the open and much ill-feeling caused. Sangster believes that this ill-feeling resulted in "a fractional check to charitable work",⁸ but this appears to be hard to substantiate.

To indoctrinate the poor of her locality in the principles of Christianity, due subordination and respect for rank was undoubtedly Hannah More's main aim in her Mendip Operation. However, perhaps her most important contribution to the moral and physical well-being of the local poor is to be found in her doctrine of self-help which engendered a new spirit of self-respect among them. What she preached to the poor of the Mendip villages in her schools she pointed out to the lower orders of the whole country through her tracts. It has already been suggested that the tracts enjoyed an enormous circulation, and that, in as much as they stressed that the poor should refrain from political action in order

⁸Paul Sangster, Pity My Simplicity, The Evangelical Revival and the Religious Education of Children, 1738 - 1800. The Epworth Press, London, 1963. pp. 113-114.

to alleviate their lot in life, they must be considered as at least a minor influence stemming the tide of revolution and disaffection during the Napoleonic wars.⁹

But perhaps the ultimate significance of the tracts lies in the doctrine of self-help that they contained. Poverty was not inevitable nor inescapable. By a truly religious life and the industry and thrift which accompanies it, the poor could raise their standard of living, get better jobs and even rise in the social scale. John Wesley had already pointed out that "religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and that these cannot but produce riches;" but he had lamented that "as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world."¹⁰ In her tracts, Hannah More vividly demonstrated the former axiom and gave every indication that she welcomed the material prosperity which Providence and hard work bestowed on the righteous. In doing so, Miss More was anticipating one of the most important aspects of the 'Victorian frame of mind'. As Houghton puts it, a godly life "can give you all that Mammon promises and heaven too."¹¹ Kingsley, in his sermon 'God and Mammon', was to echo the argument put forward in the Cheap Repository.

The very good things of this world--wealth, honour, power, and the rest, for the sake of which worldly men quarrel and envy, and slander, and bully and cringe, and commit all basenesses and crimes--all these shall come to you of their own accord by the providence of your Father in heaven and by His everlasting Laws, if you will but learn and do God's will and lead the Christlike

⁹Supra., Chapter VI. pp. 158-159.

¹⁰Cited in Thompson, op. cit., p. 355.

¹¹Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1963. p. 406.

and the Godlike life.... You shall find that godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of the life which is to come.¹²

The emphasis that Miss More placed on the material benefits to be derived from a religious, industrious and frugal life is the least stressed aspect of the tracts by historians and commentators, but perhaps one of the most significant. From this point of view, the Cheap Repository have as much in common with the books and pamphlets of Samuel Smiles,¹³ as they have with the purely religious tracts turned out by the many tract societies of the nineteenth century.

The tracts written by Miss More contained other 'radical' ideas. They enjoyed a large circulation among the upper and middle orders of society and undoubtedly 'opened the eyes' of many of them to the conditions of life among the poor. The lower orders, on the other hand, were confirmed in their suspicions that the upper orders led lives that were far from blameless. Long before the novels of Dickens and Disraeli's Sybil, Hannah More had begun to make the 'two nations' known to one another.

The great success enjoyed by the Cheap Repository encouraged the establishment of other tract societies. It is significant, for example, that in 1799, only a year after the Cheap Repository had been discontinued, The Religious Tract Society was founded.

The influence and significance of the didactic writings of Miss

¹²Cited Ibid.

¹³Samuel Smiles, a medical doctor turned journalist, published his famous book, Self-Help, in 1859. Its major tenet was that "honorable industry travels the same road with duty; and Providence has closely linked both with happiness." Over a quarter of a million copies had been sold by 1905. Asa Briggs, 'Samuel Smiles and the Gospel of Work', Victorian People, Odhams Press, Ltd., London, 1954. pp. 124-149.

More are more difficult to assess. In her life-time, her works enjoyed a very large circulation. Thoughts on the Manners of the Great went through seven editions in a few months, An Estimate of the Religion of Fashionable World was equally popular, the Strictures sold over 19,000 copies and Coelebs more than 20,000. But these large circulations and the extravagant praise that her books received from friends and admirers should not blind one to the fact that Hannah More was only one of a number of influential writers who played their part in effecting and recording the transformation of the moral and religious climate of England at the turn of the century. It is true, however, that she was one of the first major critics of Georgian morality and religion whose works seem to have born fruit in a marked change in this morality and religion.

Before long, the Romantic poets, even Byron himself, were leveling criticisms just as outspoken and sincere as those of Hannah More against Georgian and Regency society, though, of course, their recommendations differed markedly from hers. In Jane Austen's Mansfield Park, published only six years after Coelebs, in 1814, there are criticisms of contemporary education that could well have come straight out of Hannah More's one and only novel. Sounding very like one of Miss More's characters from Coelebs, Sir Thomas Bertram, admitting to himself the incorrectness of the education he has given his daughters, reflects that

principle, active principle, had been wanting, that they had never been properly taught to govern their inclination and tempers by that sense of duty which can alone suffice.

They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice. To be distinguished for elegance and accomplishments - the authorised object of their youth - could have no useful influence that way, no moral effect on

the mind. He had meant them to be good, but his cares had been to the understanding and manners, not the disposition; and of the necessity of self-denial and humility, he feared they had never heard from any lips that could profit them.¹⁴

Much of the historical significance of Hannah More's didactic writings derives from her anticipation of what Houghton calls the 'Victorian Frame of Mind'.¹⁵ A strict observance of the Sabbath, attendance at death-beds for young and old alike, regularity in affairs, a sense of responsibility for the poor, philanthropy, a suspicion of anything 'continental', all were typically 'Victorian' and all are to be found in the life and writings of Hannah More.

The area of life in which Miss More most clearly and most significantly anticipated the Victorian mentality is in her insistence that actions and conduct, to be consistently moral, must be referred to the principles of a personal religion. Meacham considers that the most important aspects of the Evangelical inheritance in Victorian England were the emphases placed first on finding salvation for oneself, and second on a personal knowledge of God's will as revealed through conscience.¹⁶ There may have been a good deal of disagreement and controversy in Victorian England but no people were more certain that they could arrive at the truth. Political, social and economic matters were all to be resolved, not only on the basis of facts or expediency, but in accord with the Word of God.¹⁷ Evolution, the treatment of African natives, the Corn Laws, factory legislation, education, foreign policy, all were

¹⁴Jane Austen, Mansfield Park, The Novels of Jane Austen, Vol. 3. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926. p. 463.

¹⁵Houghton, op. cit..

¹⁶Meacham, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 93.

debated on religious grounds. It was this ability to justify private and public actions as in accordance with the will of God that enabled the Victorians to gain what Young calls "a sense of being an Elect people."¹⁸ In her writings, Hannah More had certainly anticipated this 'creed' and may well have contributed to its widespread acceptance in the nineteenth century.

In her views of what constituted a correct education for ladies of rank, there is a great deal that anticipates later developments. She had stressed that the proper place for a wife (and her husband) was in the home and that the principal roles of a woman were those of wife and mother. By the middle of the century, "at the center of Victorian life was the family,"¹⁹ and domesticity was the great virtue.

Hannah More had pointed out to women that their chief contribution to the material, moral and spiritual welfare of their country lay in influencing their husbands. In the 1850s, Sara Ellis' Daughters of England, Wives of England, and Women of England were "standard manuals" reiterating the same argument.

Since the life of men, especially businessmen, is tending, she [Sara Ellis] said, to lower and degrade the mind, to make its aims purely material, and to encourage a selfish concern for one's own interests, a wife should be supremely solicitous for the advancement of her husband's intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature. She should be 'a companion who will raise the tone of his mind from ... low anxieties, and vulgar cares' and will 'lead his thoughts to expatiate or repose on those subjects which convey a feeling of identity with a higher state of existence beyond this present life,'²⁰

¹⁸G. M. Young, Victorian England; Portrait of an Age, Oxford University Press, London, 1963. p. 4.

¹⁹Houghton, op. cit., p. 341.

²⁰Sara Ellis, The Wives of England, London, 1843. pp. 99-100, cited ibid. p. 351.

Hannah More had said no less than half a century earlier.

In all of her books, Hannah More had urged that women develop a greater sense of propriety. For her, immodesty of dress, language and behaviour were gross faults; for the Victorians they were to become unforgivable sins. Lucilla Stanley, the heroine of Coelebs, would have been more at home in the polite society of the 1850s than in that of the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Her views on what constituted and what did not constitute suitable reading matter for young ladies were to become generally accepted by the middle of the century. Charlotte Bronte and George Elliot, for example, both shared Hannah More's distrust of the works of Shakespeare.²¹ Her warnings of the dangers involved in reading romantic novels, especially those from France, were to be echoed throughout the nineteenth century by those who felt that they encouraged sensuality and licentiousness.²²

In all those areas discussed above in which Miss More anticipated the Victorian mentality, her ideas derived almost entirely from her Evangelicalism, and may be considered as a small but significant part of the Evangelical inheritance. We have seen, however, that Hannah More's educational ideas contained more than just Evangelicalism. In her recommendations in the field of educational method she had displayed a great interest in and considerable knowledge of the special nature of childhood. It has been suggested that her recommendations represent an example of the way that the educational ideas of Rousseau, considerably

²¹Houghton, op. cit., p. 357

²²Ibid., pp. 359-361.

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modified, entered English educational thought.²³ The nineteenth century was to display an intense interest in the nature of childhood and it is significant that the Victorians were the first people to produce a literature designed especially for children. In her love and understanding of children and the state of childhood, which are clearly evident in her educational writings, Miss More occupies a very small but nevertheless significant place among the forces which helped to create the nineteenth century 'cult of childhood'.

It is impossible to live in an age and not be at least partially influenced by all the main streams of thought of that period, and in a life spreading over eighty-nine years there are bound to be many inconsistencies. Hannah More's life is, not surprisingly, full of them. She had condemned plays and the theatre, and yet permitted her own dramas to be re-published. She was suspicious of the influence of poetry and the arts but delighted, even in her old age, in discussing them with her literary friends. She had advised the women of England to be content to be wives and mothers, and continued to enjoy a freedom she felt unsuitable for others. She was "an old-fashioned Tory who wore the radical insignia of the abolition of the slave trade and the provision of instruction for the poor."²⁴ She violently condemned Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau, and Romantic poets of the calibre of Shelley and Byron, yet she read them all and was influenced by them more than she realised or cared to admit. She had preached to the poor a doctrine of passive submission to their lot in life and, at the same time, had given them an

²³Supra., Chapter VII. pp. 190-192. ²⁴Jones, op. cit., p. 229.

infallible recipé for improving their material condition. She had professed a hatred of Methodism and had been accused, with some justification, of being a Methodist.

David Spring has detected in the language of the Clapham Sect "that note of restless, forward-looking optimism so like the note sounded by the Whigs and Utilitarians."²⁵ He admits its paradoxical nature but points out that "paradox surprises less than some historians' seeming unwillingness or inability to recognise it."²⁶ What Spring says of the Clapham Sect in general is particularly true of Hannah More. She was "a woman of considerable independence of mind [who] decided for herself the relationship of 'christian godliness' to 'christian order',"²⁷ It is true that this 'independence of mind' led to views that were inconsistent and paradoxical, but perhaps we sometimes seek consistency where we have no right to expect to find it.

Hannah More emerges from history, not as a writer, a profound thinker, an educator, nor even an Evangelical, but as a human being, impossible to categorise and with all the inconsistencies and imperfections of her species in any age.

²⁵David Spring, 'The Clapham Sect; Some Social and Political Aspects,' Victorian Studies, Vol. VI. No. 1. Sept.1961. p. 48.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Jones, op. cit., p. 102.

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APPENDIX A

HANNAH MORE'S LETTER TO WILBERFORCE DESCRIBING IN DETAIL THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SISTERS IN CHEDDAR AND CONTAINING MUCH USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPERATION OF HER SCHOOLS AND CLUBS.

William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley & Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. 1, pp. 487-493.

From Miss H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

Perhaps it is the best answer to your question, to describe the origin and progress of one of our schools as detached from the rest. And I select Cheddar, which you were the immediate cause of our taking up. After the discoveries made of the deplorable state of that place, my sister and I went and took a lodging at a little public-house there, to see what we could do, for we were utterly at a loss how to begin. We found more than two thousand people in the parish, almost all very poor; no gentry, a dozen wealthy farmers, hard, brutal, and ignorant. We visited them all, picking up at one house, (like fortune-tellers) the name and character of the next. We told them we intended to set up a school for their poor. They did not like it. We assured them we did not desire a shilling from them, but wished for their concurrence, as we knew they could influence their workmen. One of the farmers seemed pleased and civil; he was rich, but covetous, a hard drinker, and his wife a woman of loose morals, but good natural sense; she became our friend, sooner than some of the decent and the formal, and let us a house, the only one in the parish that was vacant, at £7. per annum, with a good garden. Adjoining was a large ox-house; this we roofed and floored; and by putting in a couple of windows, it made a good school-room. While this was doing, we went to every house in the place, and found each a scene of the greatest ignorance and vice. We saw but one Bible in all the parish, and that was used to prop a flower-pot! No clergyman had resided in it for forty years. One rode over, from Wells, three miles, to preach once on a Sunday, but no weekly duty was done, or sick persons visited: and children were often buried without any funeral service. Eight people in the morning, and twenty in the afternoon, was thought a good congregation. We spent our whole time in getting at the characters of all the people, the employment, wages, and number of every family; and this we have done in our other nine parishes. On a fixed day, of which we gave notice in the church, all the women, with all their children above six years old, met us. We took an exact list from their account, and engaged one hundred and twenty to attend on the following Sunday.

A great many refused to send their children, unless we would pay them for it! and not a few refused, because they were not sure of my intentions, being apprehensive that at the end of seven years, if they attended so long, I should acquire a power over them, and send them beyond sea. I

must have heard this myself in order to have believed that so much ignorance existed out of Africa. While this was going on, we had set every engine to work to find proper teachers. On this every thing depended. I had the happiness to find a woman of excellent natural sense, great knowledge of the human heart, activity, zeal, and uncommon piety. She had had a good fortune for one in middling life, but a wicked son had much reduced it. She had, however, still an estate of £40. a-year, or very nearly. She brought with her a daughter, twenty-five years old, quite equal to herself in all other points; in capacity superior.

It was winter, and we all met at the school on Sunday morning at nine o'clock, having invited many parents to be present at the opening. We had drawn up some rules, which were read; then some suitable portions of Scripture; part of the 34th Psalm; then a hymn sung; and then a prayer read, composed for the occasion.

For the first year, these excellent women had to struggle with every kind of opposition, so that they were frequently tempted to give up their laborious employ. They well entitled themselves to £30. per annum salary, and some little presents. We established a Weekly School of thirty girls, to learn reading, sewing, knitting, and spinning. The latter, though I tried three sorts, and went myself to almost every clothing-town in the county, did not answer,--partly from the exactions of the manufacturer, and partly from its not suiting the genius of the place. They preferred knitting after the school hours on week-days. The mother or daughter visited the sick, chiefly with a view to their spiritual concerns; but we concealed the true motive at first; and in order to procure them access to the houses and hearts of the people, they were furnished, not only with medicine, but with a little money, which they administered with great prudence. They soon gained their confidence, read and prayed with them, and in all respects did just what a good clergyman does in other parishes.

At the end of a year we perceived that much ground had been gained among the poor; but the success was attended with no small persecution from the rich, though some of them grew more favourable. I now ventured to have a sermon read after school on a Sunday evening, inviting a few of the parents, and keeping the grown-up children; the sermons were of the most awakening sort, and soon produced a sensible effect. It was at first thought a very methodistical measure, and we got a few broken windows; but quiet perseverance, and the great prudence with which the zeal of our good mistresses was regulated, carried us through. Many reprobates were, by the blessing of God, awakened, and many swearers and sabbath-breakers reclaimed. The numbers both of young and old scholars increased, and the daily life and conversation of many seemed to keep pace with their religious profession on the Sunday.

We now began to distribute Bibles, Prayer Books, and other good books, but never at random, and only to those who had given some evidence of their loving and deserving them. They are always made the reward of superior learning, or some other merit, as we can have no other proof that they will be read. Those who manifest the greatest diligence, get the books of most importance. During my absence in the winter, a great

many will learn twenty or thirty chapters, psalms, and hymns. At the end of three years, during the winter the more serious of the parents began to attend on a Wednesday night; and on Tuesday nights, twenty or thirty young people of superior piety met at the school to read the scriptures, and hear them explained.

Finding the wants and distresses of these poor people uncommonly great, (for their wages are but 1s. per day,) and fearing to abuse the bounty of my friends, by a too indiscriminate liberality, it occurred to me that I could make what I had to bestow go much further by instituting clubs, or societies for the women, as is done for men in other places. It was no small trouble to accomplish this; for though the subscription was only three half-pence a week, it was more than they could always raise; yet the object appeared so important, that I found it would be good economy privately to give widows and other very poor women money to pay their club. After combating many prejudices, we carried this point, which we took care to involve in the general system, by making it subservient to the schools; the rules of the club restraining the women to such and such points of conduct respecting the schools. In some parishes we have one hundred and fifty poor women thus associated: you may guess who are the patronesses.

We have an anniversary feast of tea, and I get some of the clergy, and a few of the better sort of people to come to it. We wait on the women, who sit and enjoy their dignity. The journal and state of affairs is read after church; and we collect all the facts we can as to the conduct of the villagers; whether the church has been more attended, fewer or more frauds, less or more swearing, scolding, or sabbath-breaking. All this is produced for or against them, in battle array. in a little sort of sermon made up of praise, censure, and exhortation, as they may be found to have merited.

One rule is, that any girl bred in the school, who continues when grown up to attend its instructions, and has married in the past year with a fair character, is presented on this day with five shillings, a pair of white stockings, and a new Bible; and several very good girls have received this public testimony to their virtuous conduct. Out of this club, (to which we find it cheaper to contribute a few guineas, than to give at random,) a sick woman receives 3s. a week, 7s. 6d. for a lying-in, &c. &c.

We are now in our sixth year at Cheddar, and two hundred children and above two hundred old people constantly attend. God has blessed the work beyond all my hopes. The farmer's wife, (our landlady,) is become one of the most eminent Christians I know; and though we had last year the great misfortune to lose our elder mistress, her truly christian death was made the means of confirming many in piety; and the daughter proceeds in the work with great ability. She has many teachers under her, who are paid 1s. a Sunday. Once a year each young person receives some articles of dress; but having so many other schools to run away with our money, we cannot do quite so much for any as I could wish. I should add, that we have about twenty young men, apprentices, servants, &c. who attend the

whole Sunday with the humility of little children; and these, as they try hard to get a few clothes, we think it right to help with a small present. Amongst the collateral advantages resulting from the clubs, one is that the women who used to plead that they could not go to church, because they had no clothes, now come. The necessity of going to church in procession with us on the anniversary, raises an honest ambition to get something decent to wear, and the churches on Sunday are now filled with very clean-looking women. Perhaps a sketch of our expences may not be amiss; it is not quite accurate; I have no papers here.

	l.	s.	d.
House Rent	7	0	0
Repairs, white washing, benches,&c. ..	2	0	0
Salary, head mistress	30	0	0
Under-teachers	10	0	0
Bibles, Prayers, and other books	10	0	0
Caps and Tippetts, 100 girls,&c.	8	0	0
Shoes and stockings for 80 girls,&c. ..	15	0	0
Shirts, 20 young men.. .. .	5	0	0
Club subscriptions and expences	6	0	0
Incidental charities.. .. .	6	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£99	0	0

APPENDIX B

MARTHA MORE'S CHARGE TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SHIPHAM AND
ROWBERROW WOMEN'S BENEFIT SOCIETY OF 1795,

Cited in Martha More, The Mendip Annals, The Journal of
Martha More, James Nisbett and Co., London, 1859, pp 146-155.

"Amidst the many opportunities and blessings you have had of late years, I desire you will not forget that one of them is the advantage of an admirable sermon preached to you on each anniversary. It is well for us all to profit by such an opportunity; and God grant that what has this day been delivered from the pulpit may make a proper impression upon all our hearts!

"Providence has designed a particular place and situation for each of us; may we strive who shall perform our several duties in that situation best! It seems to be my particular errand at Shipham to speak the truth. You know it has been an annual custom with us to give you our opinion, reproof or encouragement, upon your conduct during the past year, as we are more particularly acquainted with many local circumstances respecting both institutions and with the morals of the young people. It is impossible that any other motive but your good should collect us together. And pray observe, I am not going to upbraid you, or to magnify ourselves. God knows we desire to be considered but unworthy instruments, though zealous to do you service. It is well for you to recollect the state of things at the beginning of our knowledge of you. It should be instructive to think what things were, and compare them with what they are. It is a lesson for humility, that you may cry aloud, 'Lord, what have we done to deserve such blessings of Thee, that our children should be snatched from destruction, and taught to read their Bible, say their prayers and keep the Sabbath - day holy; though too many of us as parents have hindered the good work. by disobeying orders, by keeping them at home, by employing them improperly?'

"See how that sounds in a prayer! And yet if you acknowledge your sins (the principal part of prayer), such confession must be made.

"Your minister, and some few friends here, can recollect, if you have forgot, the melancholy, ragged, ignorant, impudent, lying set of children who first entered these doors; can recollect how long it was before you had patience to have your children served - before you had patience to have them cleaned and clothed - and, above all, before you had any patience to have them trained for heaven.

"And what is the change? Why, many mothers, as well as many children, have found out that cleanliness and godliness go together; that industry and religion must be united; and that there is no true joy but in serving the Lord. If many are brought to this change, let us pray for more; and if some have the grace to be ashamed to think that we arrive, after travelling so many miles in a cold, wet, morning, before they have the decency to send their children a few yards, let us pray that all will

equally turn from such bold, unfeeling ways. Whatever our complaints may be (for though much is mended, yet much is still to be done), yet let us humbly beseech every heart in this company to offer one silent thanksgiving to the Almighty, that, spite of some opposing parents and many bad examples, far the greater part of those children will come from a sense of duty, and a love of spending the day according to the command of the Giver of it.

"This sounds like good news - and it is, but it ought to be much better; and what we wish particularly to remark here is, how desirous we are that the remainder should come upon the same principle; but you know (and let every conscience speak to the right person) that there are still too many, for want of better instruction and example at home, who come only for the rewards, for the feast, for the tarts, for the clothing.

"If they and you go on practising this cheat, I warn you to recollect there is One who knows the secrets of all hearts, and whom you cannot cheat on a deathbed. Let me beseech you to think well of this; and I pray that the children of whom I have made these complaints may speedily be added to the number of those who come from a sense of duty, and therefore of pleasure. Such conduct will secure our favour and kindness, which we cannot bestow equally on the good and bad, nor (we ask your own hearts) ought we. Remember that 'they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' Such I trust, will yet be the case of many a young person here.

"In addressing the young women, for whom we have ever been so particularly anxious, I am happy to omit the heavy and sad complaint we made last year, of the meeting idle company in improper places, for the purpose of rioting and dancing. Such meeting, I warned you, seldom fail of ending in the worst consequences, being generally fatal to a young woman's virtue and character. You can scarcely more rejoice at the consciousness of having shunned such improper meetings, than we are that these things are no longer practised. I trust you will persevere in this reform, and endeavour to bear in mind who has said 'She that endureth to the end shall be saved.'

"The danger of keeping bad company is the greatest evil that can happen to young or old. The Scripture says 'Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.' May you be 'received' by accepting this gracious promise; but recollect 'the unclean thing' must not be 'touched'.

"I am sorry to be obliged to complain, that some of you are more regular in your attendance when we are here, than in our absence; yet we hope and believe many find a pleasure in coming, and constancy will increase the pleasure. The instructions here will prepare you to be good wives and good mothers, as well as good Christians.

"See what an example has this day been set before you! One of your late mistresses we have had the pleasure to behold in the new character of a

wife. In every situation hitherto she has been worthy of your imitation. and we doubt not but her conduct at the head of a private family will be as well worthy your imitation, as it was when she was one of the mistresses of this school.

"Since last year you find we have had an exchange of mistresses. Some family circumstances occasioned it, though the last continue to deserve of us the same favour and good opinion.

"We have been at the expense of adding another master - a solid, knowing young man. Let me beseech you to recommend it to your grown-up sons thankfully to accept of his instructions; and we desire you will let your big boys be very constant in their attendance, and not throw away such opportunities as those we now offer you. Pray, don't keep them away for little household jobs; it will be very wicked to do so. Though you are parents, you have no right to rob them of the privilege of one chapter. How often have we repeated to you, that a little learning will always make them respected by people above them, and every way promote their interest in this world as well as the next.

"There is one thing we desire you particularly always to remember, that whosoever we place here you are to respect, and teach your children to obey; and be sure bear in mind this one certain, positive truth (it is a truth in which you cannot be mistaken), that we are as much better judges than you can be who ought to preside over this school, as the bishops are who ought to be minister of your parish. Let the men and women of Shipham and Rowberrow become honest and good graziers and hoglers. They are placed in this spot by Almighty direction. The very ground you walk upon points out your daily labour. Excel in that - and an honest hogler is as good in the eyes of the Almighty as an honest squire; therefore we wish to recommend you to do your duty in that state of life where God has placed you and called you. Every disposition to rebellion against the higher powers would prove how little you are changed in your hearts, after all that has been done for you; and remember that rebellion against rulers first brought on the troubles in France. Grieved are we to say, that in the distress of last winter there were people who petitioned against the hand that brought them assistance. Let the consciences of those ungrateful people ask them, if they had the smallest relief from any other quarter. I am truly happy to say that most of you here are innocent of what I now hint at, but you know who and how guilty many of your neighbours were. Take this short piece of advice from those who love you: - Practice but the doctrines that are preached here, and you will become good Christians in this world, and happy in another.

"I now turn to the club. A long, severe winter has just passed by; it has been a trial to the rich, as well as the poor, and particularly to the sick: therefore you, who have been so afflicted, I hope have felt uncommon gratitude for the seasonable relief you have had from the club. You who have been in health have had much cause for thankfulness likewise, in that you have escaped the miseries of a sick-bed, and that your suffering neighbor has had that assistance the box could afford; and

while we have so many kind friends assisting us, I trust we shall be enabled to go on supplying you in this comfortable manner.

"I daresay there is no woman here but will forgive my gently hinting to her, that her own three-halfpence a-week would make but a poor figure in a fit of illness, if it was not for the kind contributions of so many friends, who condescend to make part of the company with you every year, and to whom, I trust, every member feels very much obliged for both favours. My dear women, when we are far away from you, and the winter sets in believe us it is not the smallest of our comforts to reflect how many children there are upon this hill who, we hope, endeavour to fear God and keep His commandments - that there are some, and I hope will be more, young women who have seen the evil of their former ways, and are endeavouring likewise to amend them - that the mothers of these children have the hour of sickness lightened by weekly pay from the club - that their children in that hour of sorrow, can read and pray with them.

"That the Almighty has blessed this work so far is subject for gratitude; yet we cannot but mourn that so much remains still to be done. Join with us, my dear friends, hand and heart, to press forward in this business. Be you industrious and obedient on your parts, and may we be zealous on ours; and as we are an occasional company here so may we be an everlasting one in heaven! I hope, my friends, you will now shew your religion by an increasing alteration in your daily life. You now know that religion will not prevent your rising at an early hour, but promote it. Your hard labour will not be slackened, but increased; your daily occupations will be pursued with greater activity; you will be as alive at your milking, haymaking, hogling, and other employments. The difference will be, you may sing a hymn or a psalm instead of a lewd song - you may go home when your labour is over, and, if you have time, a few verses in your Bible will close a summer's day much better than gossiping out upon the hill, at one another's doors, and meddling with each other's concerns. . . . It is far more profitable to get a habit of looking into the Bible, than prying into the secrets of your neighbours. My dear women, we must endeavour to make every meeting useful. Time is short - eternity at hand - our institutions are all attempted upon religious principles; therefore it is we wish not to deceive you. This is particularly designed to relieve the sufferings of the body; our wish is, that the welfare of the soul may keep pace. You must be chastised by pain before you get relief here; the chastiser is the Almighty - the very affliction will be sent in mercy! 'Tis therefore we are anxious that the knowledge of the Scriptures should furnish you with spiritual comforts, the best support in the hour of sickness. A text of Scripture may give a blessing to a basin of broth; it will assist in giving patience, if it does not relieve your pain. Great are the mercies to be found now at Shipham and Rowberrow! May the praise be in proportion; and after having known the truth, take care you do not turn from it. Religion is equally important in every station, and at every age. Timothy from a child knew the Holy Scripture; and Anna though a widow above fourscore years old, departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day; And Joshua declares, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

"And oh, may your hearts, as well as ours, be sufficiently thankful when we contemplate the vast idea of such numbers being able to read the Bible from the instructions they have had at this house! O Lord impress it upon as many hearts! Remember the advantages of the past five years; but, be sure, regret the lost opportunities. And we hope that every heart now present will join in petitioning the Giver of all good to continue His blessing on this little work: and oh, Almighty Dispenser of mercies, do Thou continue Thy favour to this people; open the eyes of their understanding- enlarge their apprehension - quicken their desires to a further knowledge of Thy Holy Word; take from them all ignorance and hardness of heart - all obstinacy and perverseness; grant that; in future, each heart may be full of a sense of Thy presence, and that a care to please Thee may swallow up every other care! Be pleased to bless all the institutions that are carried on in this house, and grant that the several advantages and comforts they are intended to provide, may be received with gratitude from the Giver of them. May His name be glorified for every mercy; and upon every occasion may the praise be given to Him. May every attempt of the unworthy instruments be so made in humility; that they may be acceptable in Thy sight. May the knowledge of the Redeemer be increasing among young and old, that they may finally be prepared to sing His praises forever! "

The first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one. It is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear. The system is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear. The system is a complex system, and the behavior of the system is not linear.

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APPENDIX C

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APPENDIX C

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MARTHA MORE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNERAL OF MRS. BABER, ILLUSTRATING THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE THAT ALL EVANGELICALS ATTACHED TO DEATH AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE ROLE THAT THE FUNERAL PLAYED IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE LOWER ORDERS IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE MORE SISTERS.

Martha More to Hannah More, August 18, 1795, William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley & Burnside, London, 1836, Vol. I, pp. 562-567.

From Martha to Hannah More.

August 18, 1795.

I took my letter yesterday to finish it at Cheddar; but alas! hurry, grief, and agitation, render it almost impossible for me to write a word; however, I will endeavour to convey to you, that we have just deposited the remains of our excellent Mrs. Baber, to mingle with her kindred dust. Who else has ever been so attended, so followed to the grave? Of the hundreds who were assembled, all had some token of mourning in their dress. All the black gowns in the village were exhibited, and those who had none, had some broad, some little bits of narrow black ribbon, such as their few spare pence could provide. The house, the garden, and place before the door was full. But how shall I describe it--not one single voice or step was heard--their very silence was dreadful;--it was not the least affecting part to see their poor little ragged pocket-handkerchiefs, not half sufficient to dry their tears;--some had none, and those tears that did not fall to the ground, they wiped off with some part of their dress. When the procession moved off, Mr. Boak, who was so good as to come to the very house, preceded the corpse, with his hat-band and gown on, which, as being unusual, added somewhat to the scene;--then the body;--then her sister and myself as chief mourners; a presumptuous title amidst such a weeping multitude--then the gentry two and two--next, her children, near two hundred--then all the parish in the same order--and though the stones were rugged, you did not hear one single footstep.

When we came to the outer gate of the churchyard, where all the people used to wait to pay their duty to her by bows and courtesies, we were obliged to halt, for Mr. Boak to go in and get his surplice on, to receive the corpse with the usual texts. This was almost too much for every creature, and Mr. Boak's voice was nearly lost; when he came to 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' he could scarcely utter it; but to feel it, was a better thing. On our entrance into the church, the little remaining sight we had left discovered to us that it was almost full. How we were to be disposed of, I could not tell. I took my old seat with the children, and close by her place. Mr. Boak gave us a discourse of thirty-five minutes entirely upon the subject. His text was from St. John, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." He said he chose it, because it was the last she had made use of to him, (I was sitting on her bed at the same time,)--he added, she looked round her, and observed 'it was com-

fortable to have kind friends, but much better to have God with one.' His sermon was affecting and bold: as a proof of the latter, though Mr. -- -- the Vicar was there, and he himself was Curate, he said with an emphasis in his voice, and a firmness in his look, 'This eminent Christian first taught salvation in Cheddar.' He spoke of Betsy in high terms, besought all to look to her, and very sweetly put up a prayer, that a double portion of the mother's spirit might descend upon the daughter. He was very tender in his address to the children, exceedingly solemn in that to the young men and women, and concluded with a fervent and suitable prayer.

When we drew near to the grave, and the last solemn rite was performed, and 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust' was pronounced, every body threw in their nosegays. I was almost choked. When Robert Reeves, John Marshall, and the six favourites let down the coffin: they stood over it in an attitude never to be described, and exhibited a grief never to be forgotten. They feared at one time Mr. Gilling must have been taken out of the church. If you could for a moment doubt my account, I would add, that the undertaker from Bristol wept like a child, and confessed, that without emolument, it was worth going a hundred miles to see such a sight. I forgot to mention, the children sobbed a suitable hymn over the grave. There was no boisterous hysterical grief, for the departed had taught them how to select suitable texts for such occasions, and when to apply the promises of Scripture, but I think almost tears enough were shed to lay the dust. We returned as we went, save that we had left this "mother in Israel" behind. When we got the children into the great room, and missed her lively sprightly figure and movements, every heart sunk.

I said a great deal to them all, as well as I could, and wrung their little hearts; for I knew but too well, that the world and young blood would make an excellent sponge to wipe out, full soon, the awful lessons of that day. My rough nature generally directs me rather to probe than heal a wound: the natural man loves to patch, but the new piece will tear the old garment. Mr. Boak was very kind, and assisted me a good deal in talking to them; and said all now hung upon their own good conduct, whether the school should be continued or not, but he hoped we should try it at least a twelvemonth. Excellent laborious Betsy has hitherto all her life been an indefatigable slave. She will now suddenly be called into greater power, and Satan, I presume, will be more active about her than ever; therefore the truest tenderness will be, to keep a tight rein ourselves, and let her out gradually; as we have not that exalted opinion of the dignity of human nature which some gentlemen and ladies have. I have promised to go next Sunday to open the school, and talk to the people, if I am able. I think I shall go on horseback. Mrs. Baber seemed for the last six months to have been particularly preparing for death. She had been very bilious, and slept but little. Betsy would speak, and inquire how she did? her answer was, I lie awake, and in pain, but eternity is revealed to me in a manner I cannot, dare not tell! She had ceased speaking to the people after the sermon for some time, and made Betsy do all the important parts of the business; the laborious part she always did.

I should have thought it no crime to have given a considerable sum to have had you, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Thornton present. Perhaps such a sight has seldom been exhibited. Oh, that the rich and great would so live as to be so mourned! So passeth this world away. and so we go on sinning, and take no warning. Never, never had I such a difficulty to restrain my tongue, as at the moment the last office was performed: the people! the children! the solemnity of the whole! the spirit within seemed struggling to speak; and I was in a sort of agony, but I recollected that I had heard somewhere a woman must not speak in the church. Oh! had she been interred in the church-yard, a messenger from Mr. Pitt should not have restrained me, for I seemed to have received a message from a higher master within; and I have long been convinced that Satan is as often dressed in the garb of prudence as in any other, and as often succeeds in it. How many pious people prayed for her; Mr. Serle too! yet all did not prevail. She seemed indeed to have done her work. I am sure, Mr. Newton especially, will lament her, because he had seen her so often. How this Cheddar work will now go on, no human being can tell; but of this we are certain, it is in the same hands now that it was before.

MARTHA MORE.

HANNAH MORE'S LETTER TO WILBERFORCE DESCRIBING THE WEDMORE CONTROVERSY.

William Roberts, Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Hannah More, Seeley & Burnside, London, 1836. Vol II, pp. 46-50

Cowslip Green, Sept. 11.

MY DEAR SIR,

I had intended to delay the history of the Wedmore prosecution, until I saw how it would end; but your kind sympathy in our trials and difficulties leads me to trouble you with it as far as we have gone. Our hostile farmers do not present us under the Conventicle Act, of which probably they know nothing; but on some old, and I believe obsolete statute, which requires every school-master to take out a license. I dined by invitation with my diocesan, as I passed through Wells in my way home. His reception of me was highly cordial, and even affectionate; but he told me Wedmore was not under his jurisdiction, being a peculiar under the dean, in whose court we had been presented. Dr. Moss, however, (the Bishop's son,) at my request, had picked up the charges that had been exhibited against us. Among these were, that my school-master had called the bishops, dumb dogs; that he had said all who went to church, and did not come to hear him, would go to hell; and that he distributed books called 'A Guide to Methodism.' Could you believe that such impossible stuff could be seriously carried to a bishop, through the channel of some of his own chapter? One or two of these canons, (poor creatures!) say that I carry everything before me, having bitten all the country clergymen, and secured the ear of the bishop. But the mischief lies deeper. A clergyman in my own neighbourhood, where we have a flourishing school, has turned Socinian, and is now enraged at the doctrines we teach. He is doing all possible injury to us and our schemes. This cause too, has a cause--and this man's malice is inflamed by the Anti-Jacobin Magazine, which is spreading more mischief over the land than almost any other book, because it is doing it under the mask of loyalty. It is representing all serious men as hostile to government; and our enemies here whisper that we are abetted by you, and such as you, to hurt the establishment. This is only an episode, for I must talk to you more at large, and see if no means can be employed to stop this spreading poison. I hear that the author is ----, who having been refused some favour by the Bishop of London, exercises his malignity towards him in common with those whom he calls Methodists.

But to return to Wedmore. There is a new Dean of -- --. I had no avenue to this man, who, I found, had been greatly prejudiced against us by the following means. He is not rich--has a large family, and when he came down to take possession, passed his time at the house of his agent, who happened to be the very attorney who was employed to appear against us at the visitation, when we were presented. Now this attorney breathes out threatenings and slaughters against my school; he being also the agent of the Wedmore farmers. I conceived the bold measure of telling my story

to Mr. Windham, with whom my acquaintance was too slight to justify such a step; and knowing as I did, that the cause was prejudiced against me in his mind; that is, I knew that every Anti-Abolitionist in the world, was of necessity an enemy to religious instruction at home. His answer, however, was highly obliging; written, as it was amidst all the bustle of public successes. You will be pleased with Windham's conduct in this business. What effect his mediation will produce, I have yet to learn.

Some farmers in a parish adjoining, where there is also a school, have been to the fortune-teller, to know if we are Methodists, and if our school is methodistical. The oracle returned an ambiguous answer, and desired to know what reason they had for suspecting it; the farmers replied, it was because we sung Watts's hymns. The sage returned for answer, this was no proof; had they no better reason? 'Yes,' they answered, 'for if the hymns were not methodistical, the tunes were.' The Pythian asked why they were so, the reply was, 'because they were not in Farmer Clap's book!' I thought this fact ridiculous enough to amuse you. Yet these people are our judges; and there are not wanting those, who, though better taught, will listen to the representation of such accusers. In the midst of this clamour, poor Patty went down to the place two Sundays ago. The farmers called a vestry, (to which she could not get admittance,) to sign a paper to abolish the school. With great calmness she went on teaching the whole day. At night, about two hundred orderly people assembled as usual, but just as she was going to begin, two farmers came to the door, very tipsy, loudly vociferating that they would have no such methodistical doings, for that the sermon they had had in the morning was quite enough--their intoxication, however, did not give a very favourable evidence of its good effects. After they had spent their violence, Patty told them it would be a serious thing if they should die that night, after having attempted to disturb a people who were solely met for religious purposes. One of them said, 'How can you put such melancholy things in one's head, ma'am,' and ran out. She quietly went through her business to a most respectful audience, whose solemn attention rewarded her for what she had gone through. On Sunday, we are going, if I am able, again; whether the violence be found to be abated or inflamed, you shall know. I hope it may please God to endue us with a proper temper, and quiet perseverance, and that these trials may help to purify our motives. I am better myself, but we have much domestic sickness and sorrow. May all work together for good! God bless you and yours.

Yours affectionately,

H. MORE.

APPENDIX E

HANNAH MORE'S LETTER TO BISHOP BEADON STATING HER POSITION IN THE
BLAGDON CONTROVERSY, AND THROWING CONSIDERABLE LIGHT
ON THE OPERATION OF HER SCHOOLS

Cited in Henry Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838, pp. 200-222.

"My Lord,

It is with deep regret that I find myself compelled to trouble your Lordship with this letter, though your known liberality of mind gives me more courage in taking a step which I should, in any case, feel it my duty to take; for, however firm my resolution has been never to answer a line to all the calumnies under which I have been so long suffering, yet to your Lordship, as my Diocesan, I feel myself accountable for my conduct, attacked as it has been with a wantonness of cruelty, which, in these mild times, few persons especially of my sex have been called to suffer. To that defenceless sex, and to my declared resolution to return no answers I attribute this long and unmitigated persecution. I am not going to make your Lordship a party; - I am not going to clear myself by accusing others. Of my assailants I will speak as little as possible. I wish I could avoid naming them altogether. It will be out of my power to enter into a full vindication of myself against charges with which I am not fully acquainted. A wish to keep my mind calm in a dangerous illness of some months induced me to read but very little of what has appeared against me. I can only notice such more material charges as have come to my knowledge. I do not mean to extenuate, much less to deny, any point in which I may have been to blame I shall only fairly state a few circumstances which have been violently exaggerated, or grossly misrepresented; the greater part of the charges being wholly groundless;

"I had so fully persuaded myself that I had for many years, especially in the late awful crises, been devoting my time and humble talents to the promotion of loyalty, good morals, and an attachment to Church and State, among the common people, that I was not prepared for the shock, when a charge of sedition, disaffection, and a general aim to corrupt the principles of the community, suddenly burst upon me. In vain have I been looking round me for any pretence on which to found such astonishing charges. One circumstance I allude to is, my being charged with having constantly attended and received the sacrament at Mr. [Jay]'s chapel at Bath for fifteen years. The simple fact is this: The novelty and talents of Mr. -, a celebrated dissenting minister at Bath, were considered as such an attraction, that I, in common with a number of strict church people, frequently went to hear him preach. It was chiefly at six o'clock in the evening, an hour which did not interfere with the Church Service. It was not unusual to see, perhaps, near half a score of clergymen, who, I presume, no more thought they were guilty of disaffection than I myself did; I went of course, to church as usual, except that the extreme nearness of this chapel drew me a few mornings, in severe weather, when my health was bad. At one of these times I unexpectedly found they were going to give the sacrament. Taken by surprise, in a moment of irresolution,

never having been used to turn my back on the communion at church, I imprudently stayed; How far this single irregularity, which I regretted, and never repeated, deserves the term of constant, your Lordship will judge; My eldest sister has been accused of denying it. She well might deny it for she never knew it till now. I believe it to have been nine or ten years ago. Again, I did not begin to reside part of the winter at Bath till about the beginning of 1791. I never go thither till near Christmas and at the time alluded to I always left it, and went to London in February; During a part of this short season I was generally confined by illness. When the interests of the Church became a question (I cannot be quite accurate as to the time, but I think it was either seven or eight years ago) I ceased entirely to go to Mr. - 's. How far this justifies the charge of fifteen years constant attendance, your Lordship will judge. And is it unfair to request your Lordship to draw your own conclusion concerning the accuracy as well as the candour of accusers? It was subsequent to this that Mr. Bere thought so well of my principles, as to importune me, even with tears, to establish a school in his parish, lamenting its extreme profligacy and his own inability to do any good to the rising generation. There was company present when he repeatedly made these applications, which I refused, pleaded want of health, time, and money. I also declared my unwillingness to undertake it, unless it was a wish of the parish. He sent his churchwardens as a deputation from the parish; I yielded at last, on hearing that a woman, one of his parishioners was under sentence of death. I only name this to acquit myself of the charge of intrusion.

"As to connection with conventicle of any kind, I never had any. Had I been irregular, should I not have gone sometimes, since my winter residence in Bath, to Lady Huntingdon's chapel, a place of great occasional resort? Should I not have gone to some of Whitfield's or Wesley's Tabernacles in London, where I have spent a long spring for near thirty years? Should I not have strayed now and then into some Methodist meeting in the country? Yet not one of these things have I ever done.

"For an answer to the charge of my having ever made any application to get Mr. Bere removed from his curacy, I refer your Lordship to Dr. Moss and Dr. Crossman, in case you are not satisfied with the declaration of both in Dr. Crossman's printed letter to Sir A. Elton.

"Mrs. Bere letter to me, dated January 4th., 1799 complaining of Young's Monday meeting, which I was prevented answering by a long illness, was, in fact, virtually answered immediately, by my sister's writing to Young to put a stop directly to the irregularities complained of; which was done. A proof that this ground of complaint had ceased to exist when Mr. Bere made his first attack on me in the beginning of April 1800 appears by a very friendly letter which I have by me from Mr. Bere, dated March 8th, 1800, only about three weeks before Mr. Bere's open attack, and nearly a year and a quarter after the complaint had been made and redressed. Mr. Bere's affidavits, taken by himself, in his own cause, which were flatly contradicted by counter evidence, and which, having no dates to the facts which they attest, could never have been admitted in a court of justice, have all a

retrospective reference of one, two, four, and even six years back. Another proof that there was no longer any ground of complaint existing is, that, when Mr. and Mrs. Descury, a respectable family, came to live at Blagdon, near a year after, they were introduced by Mrs. Bere to the school in presence of my sister, with the highest encomiums; their attachment to the school originated from those warm praises, and was afterwards confirmed by their own frequent attendance. I should add, that, having heard in the preceding summer that Mr. Bere had thrown out from the pulpit some insinuation against the school, I went to him with the greatest civility, and assured him that as I was shocked at the thought of carrying on an opposition scheme, I was ready to withdraw the school, if it had not his entire approbation. Again he shed tears at the bare idea, and implored me not to deprive the parish of such benefit.

"When Mr. Bere sent me his hostile letter, menacing the schoolmaster, (April, 1800) I was in London; and being unable, at that distance, to inquire fairly into the complaint, I wrote twice to Mr. Bere, earnestly requesting to refer the whole to Sir A. Elton, as a respectable and judicious magistrate in the neighbourhood; and begged they might investigate the business together. This Mr. Bere twice positively refused. I could have no partial motive in the reference, for I knew so little of Sir A. Elton,¹ that he had never been in my house; whereas he had been long known to Mr. Bere, and I could not have suggested a more fair and peaceable mode of setting all to rights.

"The ground on which human prudence, especially judging after the event, may most reasonably condemn me, is, that I did not instantly dismiss Young. I grant that it would have saved me infinite distress. But I not only thought myself bound to protect an innocent man, whom I still conceive to have been falsely accused, but I was also convinced that, as the event has proved, the object in view was not merely to ruin him, but to strike at the principle of all my schools, and to stigmatize them as seminaries of fanaticism, vice, and sedition. I was highly displeased with Young when I found that he had allowed two or three of these silly people to attempt extempore prayer. It was from half a dozen to twelve or thirteen poor neighbours, who, it seems met for one hour in a week for religious conversation. That vulgar people will be vulgar in their religion, and that illiterate people will talk ignorantly, who will deny? But this had nothing to do with my very large Sunday School, where I never heard that any impropriety was complained of. No such complaint had ever reached me from any of my other schools.² Young profited so

¹Miss More was not being entirely honest here. She could not have been ignorant of Sir Abraham Elton's Evangelical principles and must have known of his ardent support of her schools and work. Bere's suspicions that Sir Abraham would wholeheartedly support Miss More were, of course, confirmed.

²This is incorrect. There had been several complaints made against Miss More's schoolteachers, and she later admits that she was forced to dismiss Mr. Harvon, the Methodist schoolteacher of Wedmore.

well by my reprimand for this injudicious measure, that his conduct was ever after perfectly correct. Nor should I have overlooked this fault, had not his morals and industry been exemplary, and had I ever, in the course of ten years, found him at all fanatical. Allow me to add that he now gives the highest satisfaction to the opulent and highly respectable family of the Latouches, near Dublin, who received him to superintend their large charitable institution, after having read all the charges against him, and whose attestation to his good conduct, together with that of Lady Harriet Daly and Baron Daly, I shall trouble your Lordship to peruse. To remove prejudices, however, I resolved to place him elsewhere, had I continued the Blagdon School, which, together with its master, had been restored (after I had dissolved it) at the earnest request of Dr. Crossman and with the consent of Dr. Moss. But after Mr. Bere's restoration to the curacy, no entreaties of Dr. Crossman could induce me to continue it. I took a journey to Dr. C.'s house in the West on purpose to assure him that I did not withdraw my school from resentment, but that I should consider the continuance of it as an act of opposition to Mr. Bere; whereas, by putting an end to the school, I thought I should disarm him of every plea for further hostility. This sacrifice for the sake of peace proved ineffectual. I abolished my school with regret (full flourishing as it was) for the second time of a Sunday in September 1801, and on the Wednesday following the most hostile of all his pamphlets against me was advertised. May I be permitted to add, that Dr. Maclaine, who spent great part of the last summers at Blagdon, knew much of the school and its master. Permit me to refer your Lordship to him. In the learned and venerable translator of Mosheim, you will not expect to find an advocate for fanaticism. It has been repeatedly said that, being a Calvinist myself, I always employed Calvinistick teachers. I never knowingly employed one. As to Calvinism or Arminianism, I should be very sorry if such terms were known in my schools, it never having been my object to teach dogmas, and opinions, but to train up good members of society, and plain practical Christians. I have discharged two teachers for discovering a tendency to enthusiasm, and one for being accused of it, without discovering such tendency. One experiment was made; for I shall be perfectly ingenuous. An inferior teacher being wanted under an excellent mistress, the clergyman ventured to employ a poor man of the parish, from having observed his constant attendance at church and his good moral conduct, though he went to the Methodist meeting. He earnestly hoped that, from the man's soberness of mind, and regularity at church, he might become entirely detached from the Methodist Society, and be the instrument of detaching others also; but, not finding this to be the case, the minister who had engaged him was convinced of the expediency of his removal, and dismissed him with my full concurrence. The Methodists are, in general, hostile to my schools, for attracting, as they say, the people from them to the Church; and I have been assured that some of their preachers have inveighed against me by name in their sermons. As to myself, I had hoped that the numerous occasions which occur in eight printed volumes, of expressing my sentiments, both religious and political, might have precluded the necessity of a formal confession of faith. I refer your Lordship to those volumes to produce a single Calvinistick passage. The last Chapter, page 8, contains my full and

undisguised view of the leading doctrines of Christianity. Those doctrines, I conceive, (for I am but a poor divine) are equally embraced by pious Arminians and Calvinists. Lest this should be thought evasive, I have no hesitation in declaring that I do not entertain one tenet peculiar to Calvinism. Let me not, however, in stating my own opinions, lose sight of that candour towards good men who think differently from me which I have always so sedulously cultivated. I admire many, especially of the old writers, of that class, such as Hooker, Bishops Hall, Hopkins, and others; but I admire them not for their Calvinism, but for their devout spirit, their deep views of Christianity, their practical piety, and their vigilance, while they inculcate faith as the principle, never to lose sight of good works.

"I had hoped that my zealous attachment to the Church must have been inferred from a multitude of incidental passages in my writings, particularly in the 6th volume: more conclusive, perhaps, from being incidental and frequent than a specifick and elaborate declaration would have been. For it is not so much from an isolated passage, as from the general tenor and spirit of his writings, that an author's principles may be deduced. Having observed, from the beginning of the French Revolution, the arts used by the Jacobinical writers to alienate the people from the Church by undermining their respect for its ministers, I made it a leading principle of a multitude of little tracts, which I wrote purposely to counteract their pestilent pamphlets, to introduce into almost every one of them an exemplary parish minister, who, without cant or enthusiasm, is always exhibited in a pious and amiable point of view. As works of imagination had been employed to induce a contempt for the clerical character, I thought these fictitious characters the most popular vehicle in which to convey an antidote for the reigning disease, and that, by assiduously infusing this spirit into the very amusements of the lower classes, I should thus lead them insensibly to an habit of loving and reverencing the clergy;

"Nor was I less amazed to find my political principles stigmatized by my accusers. Besides their general tendency, some of my tracts go directly to the defence of the constitution. Whether they were of any use in the moment of danger, it becomes not me to say. My enemies being judges, I should hope they were, as I can produce several letters of undeservedly high praises from those who are now loudest in the cry against me.

"It has been broadly intimated that I have laboured to spread French principles and one of my schools is specifically charged with having prayed for the success of the French. Am I seriously to defend myself against such charges? I plead guilty to having written an answer to Dupont, the atheistical orator of France, and of having devoted the profits of this slight work, together with those of "Village Politicks," amounting to considerable above £200, to the relief of the French emigrant clergy. To perversions of this sort I am almost daily accustomed.

"When I first established my school, poor women used to send crying infants of two or three years old, to the great disturbance of the rest,

while they kept at home children of a fitter age to learn. This led us to make it one of the rules, not to receive any under six years old. I told the mothers, 'ours was a school, not a nursery.' On this simple circumstance has been built the astonishing charge that I did not want to instruct children, but to pervert grown people. There is no end to instances of this sort; but a few may serve as a specimen. Not only conversations are printed which never took place, between me and persons whom I do not know, but about persons whose names I never heard. I am accused of being the abettor, not only of fanaticism and sedition, but of 'thieving prostitution.' I have never answered one word, though some of my best friends advised me to answer by a prosecution. This I declined, though I confess that the charge of murder could scarcely have shocked me more than that of disaffection or sedition.

"Allow me to quote one passage from another letter of Mrs. Bere, which I happen to have by me: - 'The school goes well. There seems to be a serious spirit working for good among the common people. Mr. Bere desires me to say and he thinks it is saying a great deal, that two sessions and two assizes are past, and a third of each nearly approaching, and neither as prosecutor or prisoner, plaintiff or defendant, has any one of this parish, once so notorious for crimes and litigation, appeared, and, moreover, warrants for woodstealing, pilfering, etc. are quite out of fashion.' Your Lordship will have the goodness to compare this passage with the antecedent accusations, both copied verbatim.

"I am assured by those who have carefully read the different pamphlets against me, that, while I am accused in one of seditious practices, I am reviled in another as an enemy to liberty; - one, of being disaffected to Church and State, in another of being a ministerial hireling and a tool of Government. Nay, the very tracts are specified for which the venal hireling was paid by administration! (By M. Pitt, I think.) In one I am charged with praying for the success of the French, in another, of fomenting, by my writings, the war with France, and savagely triumphing at every victory over what the author calls 'those friends to the general amelioration of human society. I am accused of delighting in a war 'which we madly carried on, which began in iniquity and ended in disgrace.' - In one place of not believing one word of Christianity; in another, of being hostile to the Church; in a third of idolizing the Athanasian creed, which 'complicated piece of metaphysicks' the author declares the Church might spare, and which he advises me, when expunged from the Liturgy to order myself to be wrapped in as a winding sheet.

"But to return to my schools. When I settled in this country thirteen years ago, I found the poor in many of the villages sunk in a deplorable state of ignorance and vice. There were, I think, no Sunday schools in the whole district, except one in my own parish, which had been established by our respectable rector, and another in the adjoining parish of Churchill. This drew me to the more neglected villages, which, being distant, made it very laborious. Not one school have I ever attempted to establish without the hearty concurrence of the clergyman. My plan of instruction is extremely simple and limited. They learn on week days

such coarse works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing for the poor. My object is not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety. I know no way of teaching morals but by teaching principles; nor of inculcating Christian principles without a good knowledge of Scripture. I own I have laboured this point diligently. My sisters and I always teach them ourselves every Sunday, except during our absence in the winter. By being out about thirteen hours, we have generally contrived to visit two schools the same day, and carry them to their respective churches. When we had more schools, we commonly visited three on a Sunday. The only books we use in teaching are two little tracts, called 'Questions for the Mendip Schools' (to be had of Hatchard), The Church Catechism broken into short Questions - spelling books - Psalter - Common Prayer - Testament Bible. The little ones repeat Watts's Hymns. The collect is learned every Sunday. They generally learn the Sermon on the Mount, with many other chapters and psalms. Finding that what the children learned at school they commonly lost at home, by the profaneness and ignorance of their parents, it occurred to me in some of the larger parishes, to invite the latter to come at six in the Sunday evening for an hour to the school, together with elder scholars. A plain printed sermon and a printed prayer is read to them, and a psalm sung. I am not bribed by my taste, for, unluckily, I do not like musick; but having heard that singing is one great attraction among the Methodists, I thought it but fair to counteract them with their own weapons, and, with this view, allowed of their singing psalms. When we are present, we ourselves always read the sermon and prayer; in our absence, the clergyman commonly chooses them for the mistress, and he or his wife is generally present, whether we are there or not. I was scarcely ever at Blagdon school without Mrs. Bere, at least. I dissolved one very large and flourishing school, because, after the death of the rector, who had assisted me in establishing it, and the removal of his curate, no subsequent curate had thought proper to attend. At Banwell, when I withdrew my school, Mr. Blomberg, the present vicar, employed the same teachers to superintend his. At Congresbury, the woman who had taught in my school now conducts that of the vicar, Dr. Small; for I had established there two small schools, and another, because the numbers did not make amends for the trouble or expense, and I was about to establish in their stead a large one in the populous parish of Chew-Magna, where the rector had long been looking out for a house for me, when the sudden and violent attacks on me discouraged or rather disabled me from any additional exertion. My schools, except in a very few instances, have always been, and now are, conducted by a mistress. I prefer women, and find it does better.

"For many years I have given away annually near two hundred Bibles, Common Prayer books, and Testaments. To teach the poor to read, without providing them with safe books has always appeared to me an improper measure, and this induced me to the laborious undertaking of the Cheap Repository tracts. In some parishes, where the poor are numerous, such as Cheddar, and the distressed mining villages of Shipham and Rowberrow, I have instituted, with considerable expense to myself, friendly benefit societies for poor women, which have proved a great relief to the sick and

lying-in; especially in the late seasons of scarcity. We have, in one parish only, a fund of between two and three hundred pounds (the others in proportion). This I have placed out in the stocks. The late lady of the manor at Cheddar, in addition to her kindness to my institutions there during her life, left at her death a legacy for the club, and another for the school, as a testimony of her opinion of the utility of both. We have two little annual festivities for the children and poor women of these clubs, which are always attended by a large concourse of gentry and clergy. As the morals of those of my own sex have been the constant object of my peculiar regard, it is a standing rule at these anniversaries, that every young woman bred in the schools and belonging to the club, who has been married in the preceding year, and can produce a testimonial of her good conduct from the minister and the schoolmistress, receives a little publick reward, consisting of a crown piece, a pair of white stockings of my knitting, and a Bible. This trifling encouragement has had its effect and sobriety and virtue are now considered as necessary to the establishment of a young woman. Forgive these petty details. At one of these publick meetings Mr. Bere declared that, since the institution of the schools, he could now dine in peace; for that; where he used to issue ten warrants, he was not now called on for two. I shall take the liberty of sending your Lordship the rules of my schools, which have never been altered; and of referring you to the testimonials (printed in the publick papers) of the churchwardens and the principle inhabitants of some of those parishes where my conduct had most been attacked. To ascertain whether I have been used to act in concert with the parish minister, and whether my schools have been of some little use in improving morals, or attracting the people to church, may I presume to refer your Lordship to a small pamphlet, called 'A Statement of Facts,' by nine clergymen who are or have been connected with my schools? May I also venture to refer you to those gentlemen personally? and may I take leave to observe that they cannot, as has been suggested, be persons of a particular description, picked out to serve a particular purpose, being the real officiating ministers of the several parishes? Two others are dead; to the widow of one of the deceased, who always spent a great part of the Sunday in my School (Mrs. Chapman), and to all who are living, I can refer, except to the curate of --,

My schools were always honoured with the full sanction of the late bishop, of which I have even recent testimonies. For ten years they met with general approbation. It does not appear that any one person who has written against them (except Mr. Bere) ever saw them. I am not accustomed to refer to others for my character; I am not accustomed to vindicate it myself; but it is natural to wish that it should not be taken from avowed enemies or total strangers. Most of my immediate neighbours, Mr. Leeves, the rector of my parish, Dr. Randolph, to whose congregation I belong at Bath, are likely to know more of my principles and conduct. My habits in the world are well known. My friendships and connexions have not been among the suspected part of mankind. My attachment to the Established Church is, and ever has been, entire, cordial, invariable, and, till now, unquestioned; its doctrine and discipline I equally approve. I have long had the honour of reckoning many of its most distinguished dignitaries among my friends.

"I am too deeply sensible of the infirmity and evil of my own mind not to allow readily that much error and imperfection may have been mixed with my attempts to do a little good; but it would be false humility not to say that the whole drift and tendency has been right to the very best of my power. Mine is so far a singular case, that I not only feel myself guiltless of the motives and actions imputed to me, but I am conscious that all my little strength is employed in the very contrary direction. Your Lordship's enlightened mind will give me credit for studiously keeping back what would, with ordinary judges, have best served my cause; I mean a resentful retaliation on the conduct and motives of my adversaries: and my forbearance in avoiding attack or accusation.³

"I would appeal to any candid judge, whether, in an undertaking so difficult and extensive, - being far from all the schools, five, ten, and from one even fifteen miles, it would be wonderful if I should have been sometimes (it has not happened often) mistaken in the instruments I employed? and if the most vigilant prudence could do more than discharge such as proved improper. In a few instances, where none could be found properly qualified on the spot I have employed strangers; but, in general, the teachers have been taken from the parish on the recommendation of the minister, or the principal inhabitants or both. All the under teachers at Blagdon were recommended by Mr. Bere. The obnoxious Wedmore school-master had notice to quit as soon after I came from London as the complaint was made, and was actually removed as soon as his wife recovered from her lying-in. I thought nothing could be more promising than this man. I found him carrying on a little trade in Bristol after having failed in a larger; an active member of the volunteer corps, and tax-gatherer of the parish.

"I need not inform your Lordship why the illiterate, when they become religious, are more liable to enthusiasm than the better-informed. They have also a coarse way of expressing their religious sentiments which often appears to be enthusiasm, when it is only vulgarity or quaintness. But I am persuaded your Lordship will allow, that this does not furnish a reason why the poor should be left destitute of religious instruction. That the knowledge of the Bible should lay men more open to the delusions of fanaticism on the one hand, or of Jacobinism on the other, appears so unlikely, that I should have thought the strongest probability lay on the other side. I do not vindicate enthusiasm; I dread it. But if even the possibility that a few might become enthusiasts should be proved, could that be justly pleaded as an argument for giving them all up to actual vice and barbarism? The late Henry Fielding assured a friend of mine, that, during his late administration of justice in Bow-street, only six Scotchmen had been brought before him. He accounted for it

³Though Miss More had not replied in print to the attacks made on her, she had encouraged her 'champions' to do so, and had sometimes edited their pamphlets, which were, incidentally, just as virulent in tone as those of her adversaries.

entirely from the peculiar attention which the Scotch pay to the early education of the lower classes. In the late revolution in France and the rebellion in Ireland, did not the sworn enemies to government and good order find the mass of the people in both countries proper tools for their iniquitous designs in proportion to their gross ignorance and unformed morals?

"In one of the principal pamphlets against me, it is asserted that my writings ought to be burned by the hands of the common hangman. In most of them it is affirmed that my principles and actions are corrupt and mischievous in no common degree. If the grosser crimes alleged against me be true, I am not only unfit to be allowed to teach poor children to read, but unfit to be tolerated in any class of society; if, on the contrary, the heavier charges should prove not to be true, may it not furnish a presumption that the lesser are equally unfounded?

"There is scarcely any motive so pernicious nor any hypocrisy so deep, to which my plans have not been attributed; yet I have neither improved my interest nor my fortune by them; I am not of a sex to expect preferment, nor of a temper to court favour; nor was I so ignorant of mankind to look for applause by means so little calculated to attain it, though perhaps I did not reckon on such a degree of obloquy - If vanity were my motive, it has been properly punished; if hypocrisy, I am hastening fast to answer for it at a tribunal compared with which all human opinion weighs very light indeed; in view of this awful responsibility, the sacrifice which I have been called to make of health, peace, and reputation, shrinks into nothing.

"And now, my Lord, I come to what has been the ultimate object of this too tedious letter, - a request to know what is your Lordship's pleasure, I have too high an opinion on your wisdom and candour to suspect the equity of your determination. I know too well what I owe to the station you fill, to dispute your authority, or oppose your commands. If it should be abolished, I may lament your decision, but I will obey it. My deep reverence for the laws and institutions of country inspires me with a proportionable veneration for all instituted authorities, whether in Church or State. If I am not permitted to employ the short remnant of life which has been nearly destroyed by these reiterated attacks, in being, in my small measure and degree, actively useful, I will at least set my accusers an example of profound obedience to those superiors whom the providence of God has set over me, and whom, next to Him, I am bound to obey,

"It will be a strong proof of your Lordship's goodness if you will

pardon the egotism and the tediousness of this letter; but I thought it my duty to be full and explicit.

"I have the honour to be,
With the highest respect, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient and most
Faithful humble servant,

HANNAH MORE

The committee on the subject of the proposed changes in the constitution of the American Medical Association has been organized and is now in session.

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APPENDIX F

CONTENTS

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I

Section 1. The American Medical Association is a voluntary association of medical practitioners in the United States and Canada, organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

Section 2. The American Medical Association is organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

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Section 3. The American Medical Association is organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

Section 4. The American Medical Association is organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

Section 5. The American Medical Association is organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

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Section 7. The American Medical Association is organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public health.

AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF MISS MORE'S EARLY BALLADS FOR THE LOWER ORDERS
WHICH PREACHES THE DOCTRINE OF " 'TIS ALL FOR THE BEST."

Hannah More, Ballads and Tales, Works. Vol. I. D. Graisberry, London,
1803, pp. 164-166.

P A T I E N T J O E :

or

THE NEWCASTLE COLLIER

HAVE you heard of a Collier of honest renown,
Who dwelt on the borders of Newcastle Town?
His name it was Joseph--you better may know
If I tell you he always was called Patient JOE.

Whatever betided, he thought it was right,
And Providence still he kept ever in sight;
To those who love God, let things turn as they wou'd,
He was certain that all work'd together for good.

He prais'd his Creator whatever befel;
How thankful was Joseph when matters went well!
How sincere were his carols of praise for good health,
And how grateful for any increase in his wealth!

In trouble he bow'd him to God's holy will;
How contented was Joseph when matters went ill!
When rich and when poor he alike understood
That all things together were working for good.

If the land was afflicted with war, he declar'd
'Twas a needful correction for sins which he shar'd:
And when merciful Heav'n bade slaughter to cease,
How thankful was Joe for the blessing of peace!

When taxes ran high, and provisions were dear,
Still Joseph declar'd he had nothing to fear;
It was but a trial he well understood,
From HIM who made all work together for good.

Tho' his wife was but sickly, his gettings but small.
Yet a mind so submissive prepar'd him for all;
He liv'd on his gains, were they greater or less,
And the GIVER he ceas'd not each moment to bless.

When another child came he receiv'd him with joy,
 And Providence bless'd who had sent him the boy,
 But when the child dy'd--said poor Joe, I'm content,
 For GOD had a right to recall what he lent.

It was Joseph's ill-fortune to work in a pit
 With some who believ'd that profaneness was wit;
 When disasters befel him much pleasure they shew'd,
 And laugh'd and said--Joseph, will this work for
 good?

But ever when these wou'd prophanely advance
 That this happen'd by luck, and that happen'd by
 chance;
 Still Joseph insisted no chance cou'd be found,
 Not a sparrow by accident falls to the ground.

Among his companions who work'd in the pit,
 And made him the butt of their profligate wit,
 Was idle Tim Jenkins, who drank and who gam'd,
 Who mock'd at his bible, and was not asham'd.

One day at the pit his old comrades he found,
 And they chatted, preparing to go under ground;
 Tim Jenkins, as usual, was turning to jest,
 Joe's notion-- that all things which happen'd were best.

As Joe on the ground had unthinkingly laid
 His provision for dinner, of bacon and bread,
 A dog on the watch, seiz'd the bread and the meat,
 And off with his prey ran with footsteps so fleet.

Now to see the delight that Tim Jenkins exprest!
 "Is the loss of thy dinner too, Joe, for the best?"
 "No doubt on't," said Joe; "but as I must eat,
 " 'Tis my duty to try to recover my meat."

So saying, he followed the dog a long round,
 While Tim, laughing and swearing, went down
 under ground.

Poor Joe soon return'd tho' his bacon was lost,
 For the dog a good dinner had made at his cost.

When Joseph came back, he expected a sneer,
 But the face of each Collier spoke horror and fear;
 What a narrow escape hast thou had, they all said,
 The pit is fall'n in, and Tim Jenkins is dead!

How sincere was the gratitude Joseph express'd!
How warm the compassion which glow'd in his breast!
Thus events great and small, if aright understood,
Will be found to be working together for good.

"When my meat," Joseph cry'd, "was just now
"stol'n away,
"And I had no prospect of eating to-day,
"How cou'd it appear to a short-sighted sinner,
"That my life wou'd be sav'd by the loss of my
"dinner?"

1. The first part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

3. The third part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

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8. The eighth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

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9. The ninth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

11. The eleventh part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

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15. The fifteenth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

16. The sixteenth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

17. The seventeenth part of the document is a list of the names of the persons who have been named in the proceedings.

AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF MISS MORE'S LATER BALLADS FOR THE LOWER ORDERS
OF A PURELY POLITICAL NATURE

Cited in Thompson, The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London, 1838, pp. 398-399

AN ADDRESS TO THE MEETING IN SPA FIELDS, 1817

What follies, what falsehoods were uttered in vain
To disturb our repose by that Jacobin Paine!
Shall Britons, that traitor who scorned to obey,
Of Cobbett and Hunt now become the vile prey?

The knaves think to cheat you in friendship's disguise,
For all they have told you they know to be lies;
They mean not to serve you; you are but their tools;
How dare they cajole you as if you were fools?

They'd make you their dupes, on your shoulders they'd ride,
And when they have used you, they'd kick you aside:
Then shun these deceivers, to England be true,
And care not for miscreants who care not for you.

Now hear a kind friend, and I'll tell you a story,
How poor faithful Britons may rise to true glory;
For you'll ne'er mend your fortunes, nor help the just cause,
By breaking of windows, or breaking of laws.

That "England expects you should all do your duty,"
Is a phrase, I am sure, that cannot be new t'ye;
But can you your hero so sadly affront,
To confound the great Nelson with Cobbett and Hunt?

Shall men who once conquered at famed Trafalgar
Begin at Spa Fields to wage civil war?
Shall the glory of English men ever be stained?
Shall Spa Fields thus lose all that Waterloo gained?

They assert that "misfortune no further can go"
They forget that a prison is still greater woe:
They tell you "The climax of misery is gained;"
They forgot to inform you a gibbets remained.

Thus to prisons and gibbets these traitors would bring
The Briton who now loves his country and King.
Then cheer up, my lads, be patient awhile,
Abhor these deceivers, who stab while they smile.

The rich meet together your wants to redress;
They pity your sorrows, they mourn your distress;
They deny themselves daily of all they can spare;
Their poor honest neighbours shall soon have a share.

Employment they'll give to the able and strong,
And nourishing food to the helpless and young;
And He who the multitude graciously fed
Will not long from His servants withhold daily bread.

APPENDIX H

MARIANNE THORNTON'S RECOLLECTIONS OF HANNAH MORE AND HER SISTERS. IT IS A USEFUL CORRECTIVE TO THE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY HER EVANGELICAL BIOGRAPHER. ROBERTS, THAT MISS MORE WAS NOTHING BUT A PIOUS PURITAN.

Cited in G. M. Forster, Marianne Thornton, A Domestic Biography, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1956, pp. 38-41.

"But I have yet said nothing of the friend par excellence of my mother, the woman who held that rare place of having been my father's nearest associate and most confidential counsellor before his marriage, and then become the nearest and dearest tie she had out of her own family, to my mother. I mean Mrs. Hannah More. I should add Hannah More and her sisters for my parents loved them all, and though Hannah More was the most celebrated, they always thought Patty her equal in talent and goodness. 'May is coming and then Hannah will be with us,' was one of the earliest hopes of my childhood, and when she did arrive I always felt I had a fresh companion just my own age, and ready to sympathize with all my pleasures and troubles. Her health was always very bad and often prevented her going out for weeks together, and when this was the case and I was too young to go to Church, I was delighted at being left under her care on a Sunday. How well I remember sitting on her bed whilst she discoursed to me about Joseph and his brethren, and all the wonderful adventures of the children of Israel with such eloquence and force that I fancied she must have lived amongst them herself. She was in many ways a charming companion for children, but she had very little power of resisting either persuasion or fun, and I early found I had much more influence over her than I had over my mother. As I grew older I learnt not to take advantage of this. I have this year [1857] revisited that Paradise of my childhood, Barley Wood, and fancied I could once more see the venerable forms, and hear the kind greetings of the 5 hospitable sisters.

"Surely there never was such a house, so full of intellect and piety and active benevolence. They lived in such uninterrupted harmony with each other, were so full of their separate pursuits, enjoyed with such interest and vivacity all the pleasures of their beautiful home, or wholly laid aside all the forms of society that were irksome, that young or old one felt oneself in a brighter and happier world, alloyed indeed by the most fearful attacks of illness occasionally, but even when these occurred the patience and cheerfulness of both patient and nurses never failed. I can now imagine our arrival at the door covered with roses, and 'the ladies' as they were always called, rushing out to cover us with kisses, and then take us into the kitchen to exhibit us to Mary and Charles, the housemaid and coachman, then running themselves to fetch the tea things, Mrs. Patty allowing no one but herself to fry the eggs for 'the darling', the brown loaf brought out, the colour of a mahogany table, baked only once a week, of enormous size but excellent taste. Then the 2 cats called 'Non-resistance' and 'Passive obedience' who were fed by us all day long, and then the next day crowns of flowers were made for ourselves, garlands for the sheep; the peas we were set to pick. and then

shell, perched upon the kitchen dresser, while Sally made the room resound with some of her merry stories of the cottagers round, and then we were sent off by ourselves or with some village child to buy chickens at the next farm, and when we returned dragging along our purchases, how we were fed with strawberries and cream, and told to lie down in the hay whilst Charles the coachman, gardener bailiff and carpenter, made us a syllabub under the cow. Then came Sunday--when they were younger 'the ladies' rode behind Charles on horseback to the school they meant to visit, but in my time they always went in some odd conveyance on wheels. In those small parishes the service was seldom performed twice in the day and after going with the children to church we dined at some farmer's who was proud to take us in, and then proceeded to the school.

"How Bell and Lancaster [educationists] were unknown then, and to read their Bible was the highest summit of knowledge to which they aspired. I chiefly recollect Mrs. Hannah's or Mrs. Patty's eloquent exhortations made to the whole school in the most familiar homely language, full of anecdotes of the people round them, as well as of the good people who lived in old times, and full of practical piety brought down to such minute details one never hears now. I particularly remember how she explained the fifth commandment, enjoined us to 'do errands for mother not saucily or lazily or stupidly' amongst many other small duties that she enumerated. Hannah More was always ready to talk about the literary set with whom she passed her youth. Many an evening has she amused me by describing Johnson and Burke, Horace Walpole, Mrs. Montagu and the many personages I had read of in Boswell, and for this reason I suppose no period in history interests me so much. At our last two visits to Barley Wood she was alone living of all the band of sisters. She was too ill even to leave her bedroom, but her flow of spirits never failed, her sufferings of body seemed conquered by her cheerfulness, and her love of all she had ever known, her interest in their welfare, her enjoyment of their society was as great as ever. One night her maid came to send me out of her room, saying her mistress would be tired, and must be put to bed, she being then confined to it the greater part of the day. While Mary went down for something, Mrs H. More said 'We have not had half our talk out, and it does not tire me a bit, hide behind the window curtain and come out when Mary fancies she has shut me up.' No girl of 16 could have enjoyed the trick more. But she too is now lying in Wrington Churchyard by her sisters and Barley Wood has passed into other hands, but God has indeed given them a better name than sons and daughters."

APPENDIX I

CHEAP REPOSITORY TRACTS ASCRIBED TO HANNAH MORE

M. G. Jones, Hannah More, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 272-273.

The Apprentice's Monitor; or Indentures in Verse.
 The Carpenter; or the Danger of Evil Company.
 The Gin Shop; or a Peep into a Prison.
 The History of Tom White, the Postillion.
 The Market Woman, a true tale, or Honesty is the Best Policy.
 The Roguish Miller; or Nothing Got by Cheating.
 The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain. Part I.
 The Two Shoe-makers.
 The Lancashire Collier Girl.
 The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain. Part II.
 Patient Joe; or the Newcastle Collier.
 The Riot, or Half a Loaf is better than no Bread.
 The Way to Plenty.
 The Honest Miller of Gloucestershire.
 The Two Wealthy Farmers; or the History of Mr. Bragwell. Part I.
 The Two Wealthy Farmers; or the History of Mr. Bragwell. Part II.
 Robert and Richard.
 The Apprentice turned Master.
 The History of Idle Jack Brown.
 The Shopkeeper Turned Sailor. Part I.
 Jack Brown in Prison.
 The Hackney Coachman, or the Way to get a Good Fare.
 Sunday Reading: On Carrying Religion into the Common Business of Life.
 Turn the Carpet; or the Two Weavers.
 Betty Brown, the St Giles's Orange Girl.
 Sunday Reading: The Grand Assizes; or General Gaol Delivery.
 The History of Mr Bragwell; or the Two Wealthy Farmers. Part III.
 A Hymn of Praise for the Abundant Harvest of 1796.
 The History of the Two Wealthy Farmers. Part IV.
 The Two Wealthy Farmers, with the sad Adventure of Miss Bragwell. Part V.
 Black Giles the Poacher. Part I.
 Sunday Reading: Bear Ye One Another's Burdens; or the Valley of Tears.
 Black Giles the Poacher. Part II.
 The Cottage Cook, or Mrs Jones's Cheap Dishes etc.
 The Good Militiaman.
 Tawny Rachel, or the Fortune Teller.
 The Sunday School.
 The Two Gardeners.
 The Day of Judgement.
 The History of Hester Wilmot.
 Sunday Reading: The Servantman turned Soldier.
 The History of Hester Wilmot. Part II.
 The Lady and the Pye; or Know Thyself.
 Sunday Reading: The Strait Gate and the Broad Way.

The History of Mr Fantom, the new fashioned philosopher and his man William.
Sunday Reading: The Pilgrims. An Allegory.
Dan and Jane; or Faith and Works.
The Two Wealthy Farmers. Part VI.
The Two Wealthy Farmers. Part VII.
The Plum-cakes.

APPENDIX J

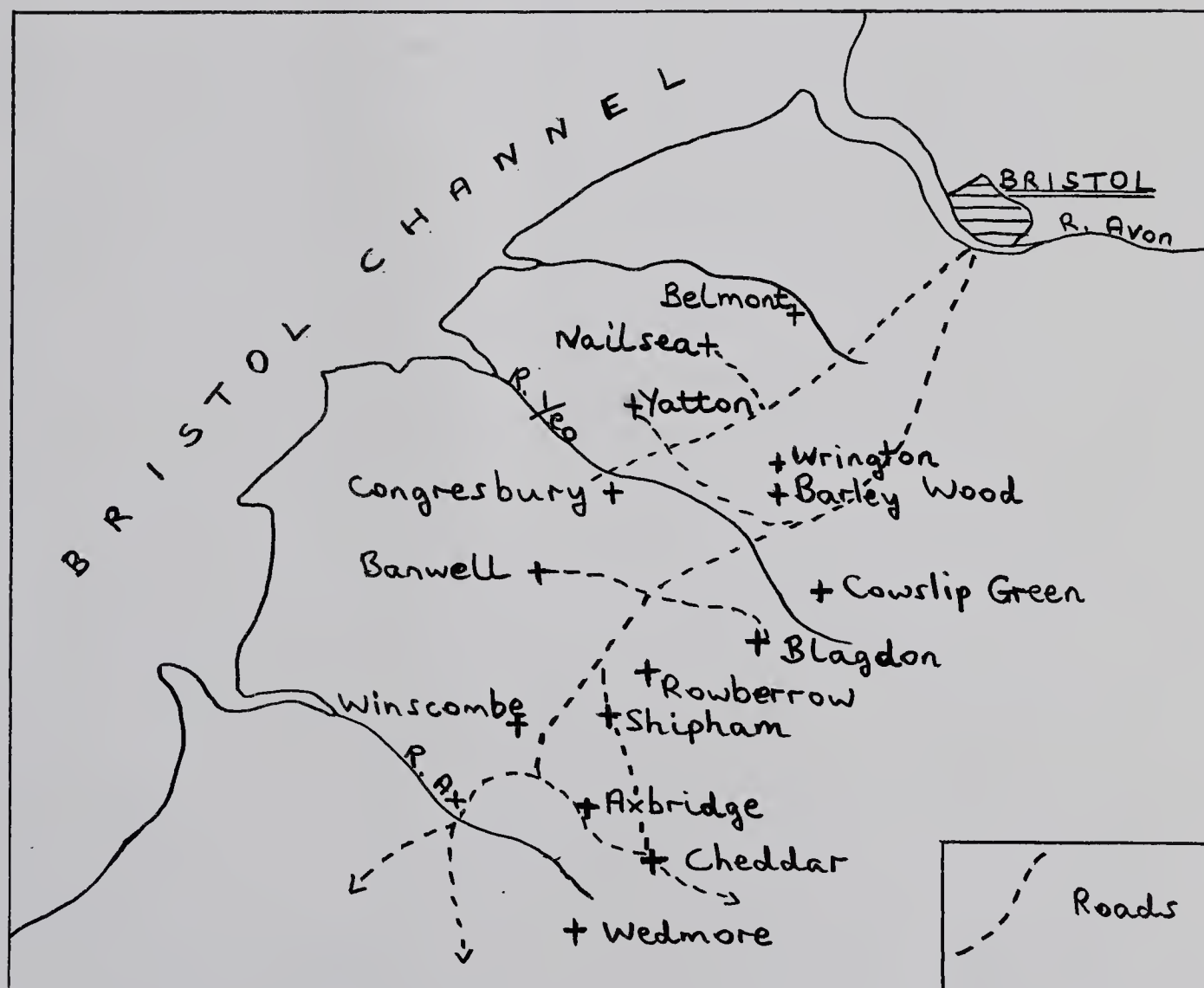
CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF HANNAH MORE

1745. Birth of Hannah More.
1757. The More sisters open their school for young ladies at Bristol.
- 1767-1773. Approximate period of Hannah More's engagement to Mr. Turner.
1773. Publication of The Search after Happiness.
- 1773-1774. Hannah More's first visit to London and entry into fashionable society.
1774. First performance of The Inflexible Captive at Bath.
- 1777-1778. Hannah More's masterpiece, Percy, enjoys record run at Covent Garden during December and January.
1779. Death of Garrick in January. The Fatal Falsehood performed at Covent Garden.
1782. Publication of the Sacred Dramas.
1785. Hannah More moves to Cowslip Green.
1788. Publication of Thoughts on the Manners of the Great.
1789. First school of the Mendip Operation built in Cheddar.
1790. Publication of An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. School opened at Shipham and Rowberrow. Publication of The Slave Trade.
1791. Schools opened at Congresbury, Yatton and Axbridge.
1792. School opened at Nailsea. Publication of Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont and Village Politics. Cheap Repository commenced.
1795. School opened at Blagdon.
1798. School opened at Wedmore.
1799. Publication of Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education. Wedmore Controversy.
- 1800-1803. Blagdon Controversy.
1802. Hannah More moves to Barley Wood.
1805. Publication of Hints towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess.
1809. Publication of Coelebs in Search of a Wife.
1811. Publication of Practical Piety.
1812. Publication of Christian Morals.
1815. Publication of An Essay on the Character of St. Paul.
1817. New series of tracts begun.
1819. Publication of Moral Sketches. Death of Martha More.
1825. Publication of The Spirit of Prayer.
1833. Death of Hannah More.

APPENDIX K

MAP SHOWING SITUATION OF VILLAGES IN WHICH
MISS MORE ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS

Based on the map given in Henry Thompson,
The Life of Hannah More, T. Cadell, London,
1838, p. 94.



0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15
Scale in Miles.

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